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INNOCENCE
AND
IGNORANCE

Innocence and Ignorance

INNOCENCE AND IGNORANCE

BY

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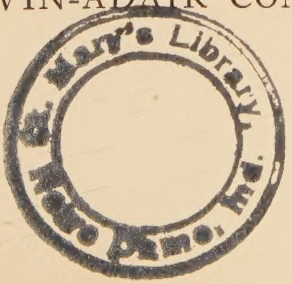

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TO

D. L. M.

MODEL OF PURITY AND TRUTH

WHO HAS LIVED

THE PRINCIPLES OF THIS BOOK

THIS TRANSLATION IS DEDICATED

AS A SLIGHT TOKEN OF LOVE AND ESTEEM

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FOREWORD

INNOCENCE AND IGNORANCE—the combination may be tragic! Some months ago there came to my attention a striking illustration of how pitiable may be the consequences of this unfortunate union. A young woman of eighteen or so, educated in a convent, was persuaded by her mother to marry a certain man who was considered in society to be in every way a desirable "catch." What was her horror to find what marriage really meant —the essence of the contract she had made as an act of filial piety!

After months of bitter degradation with a diseased brute, she left the man and is now supporting herself by hard work. Had she not been ignorant as well as innocent, she

would never have entered into any such agreement with any man, much less with this particular one. She would have consecrated herself to God in some religious community. Now she cannot. Her life is ruined. Convents are closed to her, and she must even bear the stigma of being a divorcée.

This is an unusual case. But it is not as unusual as many will suppose. And because it is not as unusual as it should be, and for other reasons, we have thought it wise to give to the American public this work by an eminent French Dominican on a topic of the greatest importance—education to purity.

Young women have a right to be protected against any such false step as was forced upon this innocent girl through her ignorance. It was not the less false that it was sanctioned by society's laws. For it is a crime, comparable, perhaps, only to actual seduction, to allow our young girls to enter into such an

intimate and wide-reaching relationship with a man without knowing exactly what they are doing. The consequences are too grave for themselves, for their husbands, and for the possible children. Love may be blind, but he should not be blindfolded in this way.

And men, too, have a right to be protected against the ignorance of women in such matters. More matrimonial infelicity than we shall ever know is caused by uncongeniality in this regard, which might have been avoided had the woman understood beforehand what would be expected of her. She may resign herself after she is once in this position, but she cannot completely hide her disgust, and men of a certain temperament will be unsatisfied, if not suspicious and jealous.

On the other hand, young men or young women should know, to some extent, what they are giving up if they become priests or religious. Consecration to God should be

full and knowing. There should be no vain regrets aroused by knowledge after it is too late honorably to change.

These considerations argue in favor of telling all children about the facts of life. It might be wiser, had we the disposition of affairs, to arrange some other way of perpetuating the human race. But as God designed this particular and only method, we think that young people growing up have a right to know of it, and that those to whom they are entrusted have the duty of enlightening them in a frank, pure, intelligent way. This duty binds even in the case of those who might be kept in ignorance. All children should be told, for the reasons that we have stated.

But in case these reasons should not appear convincing to some persons, Abbé Gillet goes in detail into another and clinching argument. It is not, he shows, a question of keeping children in ignorance of sexual facts or of telling

them everything. Rather it is a question of who shall tell them—vicious companions or pure, truth-loving lips of parents or educators. He effectually punctures the theory, hugged so tightly by some credulous parents, that the average child can for very long in these days be kept in ignorance on this point. Between the street, the newspaper, magazines, the theatre, the "movies," companions, picture galleries, museums, and dozens of other avenues that arouse and satisfy his curiosity, it is quixotic to imagine that any but an unusual child will long remain without some knowledge on these dangerous and inflammatory subjects.

Some children, it is true, will go through these dangers and never be enlightened. They will have eyes and see not, ears and hear not. But they will be exceptions, and it is impossible to tell beforehand which they will be. It is a certain spirit of God that breatheth

where it listeth, and the child who possesses that spirit assuredly will not be hurt by a reasonable explanation from his mother's lips. No harm will be done in enlightening these children in the attempt to safeguard those who need knowledge.

If, then, knowledge is ordinarily bound to come, it is best that it should come from those interested in the spiritual welfare of the child. Abbé Gillet, therefore, advocates a common-sense explanation, by parents or teachers or confessors, that will be adapted to the individual child. This explanation should not go into scientific details, as if each child were a student of gynecology; it should not be collective; it should not be the same for all, nor always given at the same age. Because what is told, and how it is told, must vary from child to child.

Abbé Gillet does not give a typical initiation. There are no typical cases. Each one

is individual, and we must leave to the good sense of the parent, or other person charged with the education of the child, the duty of adapting to his individual needs the necessary information.

And accompanying this initiation into the mysteries of life, there should be a well thought out moral education strengthening the will of the child to resist the allurements of sense. Prayer, church-going, the Sacraments, must all conduce to this end of building character. Piety and religion must be developed, not pietism or religiosity.

Abbé Gillet, the author of this excellent essay on training in purity, is an eminent French Dominican. He has occupied several important and responsible positions in his Order and has written extensively on educational subjects. One of his books, *The Education of Character,* has recently been translated into English, and forms a worthy sup-

plement to the present important topic. After years of experience as a teacher and a confessor, he speaks with authority upon this question.

J. Elliot Ross, C.S.P.

The Newman Club, University of Texas,

PREFACE

THE subject of training in purity, approached from the Christian point of view, presupposes that this question was first stated in all its distinctness by our Lord. Principles for its solution are contained in Scripture and tradition, and no new conclusion can contradict these principles. Let us content ourselves with stating them.

It is certain, according to the teaching of faith, that chastity is a gift of God. "I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, unless God gave it." [1] We receive this gift upon the day of our Baptism, together with sanctifying grace and all infused virtues; we recover it by Penance when in the course of our lives we have had the misfortune to lose it. St. Paul also tells us that chastity is a fruit of the Holy Spirit.[2]

But how can we preserve and develop this

supernatural grace of continence? Above all, by what supernatural means of the same order as itself? "Watch and pray," says our Lord, "lest ye enter into temptation; for the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." [3] St. Peter tells us: "Be sober and watch, for your adversary the devil goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." [4]

The whole Christian tradition, by the voice of the Fathers, theologians, mystics, and ascetics, has propounded these evangelical and apostolic principles and has insisted upon them. Apart from these principles, no training in purity is possible.

But if it be beyond doubt that chastity is a gift of God, a fruit of the Holy Spirit; if it be not less evident that without prayer and the frequentation of the Sacraments we cannot preserve and develop this delicate flower of purity; yet it remains to determine just in what precisely consists the vigilance recommended upon this point by our Lord.

In the first place, nothing should be overlooked that can in any way taint chastity. Its

domain extends not merely to impure acts, but to words, desires, and even to thoughts, where impurity has its origin. Further, our vigilance should be the greater because original sin has created in us the fire of concupiscence, spoken of by the Fathers and the Scriptures, by reason of which we are inclined to seek the pleasures of the flesh at the expense of the joys of the spirit.

There is no Christian soul so holy that, placing its trust in its own strength, it can ever dispense with watchfulness in these matters. But how should one exercise this Christian vigilance, especially over children who are beginning to use their reason, and whose will, although supernaturalized by grace and the possession of a divine power of resisting the suggestions of the flesh, has not yet had time fully to assimilate this force by a corresponding activity?

Such is the problem presented to-day with greater force than ever, it seems, to the minds of Catholic educators alive to their responsibilities.

We hear it maintained by some men that the Christian tradition is useless, that knowledge is completely sufficient, and that by enlightening children at an early age about the whole subject of chastity we shall make them practise this virtue and avoid the contrary vice.

But nothing is more false. This scientific method, pure and simple, of initiation is neither Christian nor natural. It is not natural because the experience of all time abundantly proves that it is not enough to know the good in order to do it, and that to learn of evil, without having first gained by appropriate education of the will the power to resist its allurement, is to put one's self in the proximate occasion of falling. But particularly is this method not Christian; for it attributes to purely human means a preventive value that belongs of right only to supernatural means, such as the grace of God, prayer, and the Sacraments. All Christian psychologists, from the Fathers of the Church to the

most recent ascetic writers, are unanimous upon this point.

It can even be asserted without fear of contradiction that the Christian tradition has always been opposed to a knowledge of such things given apart from the proper time, place, and person; and that in what concerns the training of children in purity, it prefers ignorance to knowledge.

Here, however, we must guard against all exaggeration and prejudiced interpretations.

Two rocks are to be avoided. Under pretext that children have received from God the grace of purity, one may say: "God's grace is sufficient, and there is no danger in enlightening children at a tender age upon a problem as delicate and complex as that of chastity: the divine strength will supplant their human weakness in the face of such revelations." Or, going to the opposite extreme, some one else may say: "Since children have received from God the supernatural virtue of chastity, let grace work in them. Take no account of the demands of their nature; their

innocence will protect them and they will develop under the safeguard of their ignorance."

The truth is between these extremes, and to realize this it is only necessary to reflect that if grace perfects our nature, it does not suppress it. Indeed, so far from suppressing it, grace, on the contrary, adapts itself to nature's laws in order to assimilate nature and to be assimilated. Grace is a supernatural means that enables nature to rise above itself without ceasing to be itself.

Therefore it is clear that, from the point of view of morals, the education of the will of children should precede that of the intellect. This is especially true where, as in the case of chastity, knowledge does not give power, but rather weakens the will if it is not sufficiently strong to resist the suggestions of the "knowledge of good and evil." It follows that, just so far as the will of a child has not been armed by a complete Christian education beginning with the cradle and continued through life, ignorance is preferable to knowledge.

But when a child's will, by constant supernatural action, has been formed to resistance, does it follow that in every case ignorance should be supplanted by knowledge? The reply to this question is not theoretical, but practical. And this reply is the subject of this book.

We shall try to show, in the light of the psychology of St. Thomas, that in every case scientific investigation, whether individual or collective, upon matters of chastity is unnecessary; and that in each case it is dangerous, especially on account of the technical crudity and universality of method, that does not take into account the individual and relative needs of children.

Further, we shall endeavor to prove that systematic ignorance, which on its side takes no notice of the relative and individual needs of the children, no matter what the circumstances, is exposed to serious miscalculations, especially in these difficult times when the dangers of a vicious initiation, despite all vigilance, multiply about the path of children.

Finally, our idea is that, in the field of purity, the natural educators of the child—his parents—or, in their default, those upon whom falls the care of his soul, ought to guard his ignorance in so far as his will is not sufficiently prepared to resist the movements of the flesh that may come from a precocious initiation; but we think that, for children who have enjoyed a complete and methodical Christian education of the will, a sensible initiation ought to replace ignorance, whenever the need manifests itself, and upon the express condition that this initiation be graded to real and not imaginary needs, having in each case a strictly individual character, and supplementing a firm Christian education, in which supernatural means always take precedence of purely natural ones.

M.-S. GILLET, O.P.

[1] Wisdom vii, 21.
[2] Gal. v, 23.
[3] Mark xiv, 38.
[4] I Pet. v, 8.

INNOCENCE
AND
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CHAPTER I

THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD AND EDUCATING TO PURITY

OF the educators who have approached this question of training in purity, two classes especially claim our attention: the advocates of a scientific initiation pure and simple and the defenders of absolute ignorance. We believe that both classes have assumed an exclusive and irreconcilable attitude in regard to a problem particularly remarkable for its complexity, and the individual and collective solution of which is capable of an infinity of shades. This will appear better from the exposition we shall give of these contradictory methods. The first will be the way of "initiation."

I. Scientific Initiation Pure and Simple

AMONG the advocates of a method of intellectual initiation into the domain of purity, we encounter on the ground floor, as it were, the defenders of a scientific initiation pure and simple, individual and collective, without distinction of age or sex. It is true that at present these partisans are rare. But the cries they raise about their method, though doomed to impotence by their radicalism, are so loud that they force themselves upon the attention of the most indifferent.

According to Dr. Doléris, of the Academy of Medicine, training in purity through science is the "only practical and legitimate" method. He sustained this thesis in a report presented in August, 1910, to the Third International Congress of School Hygiene, and again in February, 1911, before the principal members of the Société Française de Philosophie.[1]

"Undoubtedly we should," he writes, "distribute the elements of this education accord-

ing to age and environment, the gradation following the development of reason and interest"; but the ideal is "to initiate ahead of instinct, so as to leave no room for surprise and fear when the organs manifest their vitality and the senses and imagination awaken on account of these manifestations." [2]

But who should give this scientific teaching? Notwithstanding its antiquity and the sentimental reasons in its favor, Dr. Doléris does not believe in the efficiency, or even the practical possibility, of family education. "I believe that we shall easily agree," he declares, "if, completely recognizing the theoretical possibility of an excellent sexual education by the family method, we remark that to give it would require reflective, intelligent, cultivated, and competent parents. That this condition is not fulfilled in the majority of families cannot readily be denied, and the reason for this is understood." [3]

Since family education, therefore, is practically impossible, school education must be substituted; and for scientific individual ini-

tiation we must have scientific collective initiation. And how should the instructors, qualified to give this scientific and collective teaching in the schools, go about their task? "The point is, then, by the early teaching of the natural sciences (which should be a primary element of the new education), to accustom children to the phenomena of generation, to make them observe them first in regard to plants, and afterwards in animals." [4] And Dr. Doléris thinks that there is no objection to the smallest child being initiated into the less technical details of such an education.

Is this all? Of course not. We must join to this early teaching of the natural sciences "some distractions and occupations that tire the body while at the same time opening up perspectives of activity and will-power. In short, it naturally implies giving a large place to hygiene." [5]

Natural sciences, sports, hygiene—behold, according to a contemporary medical authority, the essentials of the new way of training to purity!

But what of moral education, properly so called? some one may ask. Dr. Doléris does not attach much importance to this, since it concerns abnormal children. For those unstable natures in whom a precise knowledge of things hardly inspires a clear, simple, and natural conception of the sexual life (but who, doubtless, are rather numerous), "it is necessary to have a solid moral education, which alone is capable of protecting them against certain temptations." [6]

For normal children—by definition the majority—the scientific initiation suffices. Dr. Doléris does not forbid completing this by moral education; but he has more confidence in athletics than in moral counsels.

This theory has at least one merit—that it is stated frankly and clearly. But, in the light of a sane psychology of childhood, what value has it? Let us say at once that even in the Société Française de Philosophie, where it was presented, this theory found no echo. Neither M. Durkheim, nor M. Bureau, nor M. Parodé, nor M. Malapert, nor M. Luto-

slawski, who took part in the discussion, agreed with the radical conclusion of Dr. Doléris.

Doubtless their own views on this delicate subject should be examined cautiously, as we shall soon see. But the point is that they all reject the scientific method, pure and simple, of initiation as inefficient and dangerous. And in this they are evidently correct.

Why? Let us show briefly.

In the first place, it is not pretended that to give moral value to the practice of chastity no previous knowledge of the general object of this virtue is needed. Chastity does not escape, in its practice, the essential laws of human activity. Nothing is willed that is not known, says the Proverb; and it speaks truly. We can will nothing in a human way —that is to say, freely—without knowledge; and the moral value of our voluntary acts depends in a certain measure upon the knowledge which accompanies them. This, preserving due proportion, is just as true of children as of mature men; and the law applies just

as well to chastity as to any other virtue. Particularly and always we assert that knowledge is a condition of morality, or, if one prefers, of liberty of our acts. Not, indeed, scientific knowledge, strictly speaking (since I am opposed to that), but at least the general knowledge which insures the substantial value of every human act, and permits, without entering into any technical detail proper to the virtue of chastity, advertence to the fact that there is question of this virtue and of no other.

How, then, can children, arrived at the age of reason, practise chastity, and acquire this virtue positively and gradually, if they have no idea, even general, of the object with which it is concerned; if, for example, they do not suspect that there are certain thoughts, certain desires, certain acts, from which, for love of God, they should abstain?

One can doubtless explain how, by the help of ignorance, exceptional children, and even older persons, have preserved their "innocence." One may even ask if the maintenance

of this conserving ignorance for the longest time possible would not be preferable to all intellectual initiation, no matter how soothing? For scarcely any one denies the danger in these inflammable matters.

This is a question to which we shall return, for it deserves discussion. But for the time being this is not the point. We are concerned with finding out only whether the acquisition or development of the natural virtue of chastity is or is not conditioned by a knowledge, at least general, of the object of this virtue.

Now who will dare to pretend that chastity enjoys an absolutely special privilege; that it is not at all subject to the fundamental laws of human activity; and that the will can, upon this extremely delicate point, direct the sensibility without itself being orientated by a certain knowledge, just as attenuated as you wish, of the end to be realized and the means to be employed? The will by its nature is blind, as are all the instincts. If it must direct its efforts in a given objective direction, such as chastity, and by the repetition of

proper and determined acts get the habit of naturally acting in that way, which is the characteristic of every acquired virtue, it is very necessary that there should be some knowledge of the object, although this knowledge be reduced to the minimum.

I know very well that some educators speak of an innocence preserved by ignorance, and I do not contradict them. But this negative innocence has nothing in common with positive innocence begotten in the acquired virtue of chastity. Here I merely allude to this. I shall explain its mechanism later, in showing the important rôle it plays in the development even of the infused or supernatural virtues.[7]

One thing more. I do not for a moment propose to decide whether it is better, from the educational point of view, to prefer negative innocence, founded on ignorance, to positive innocence, requiring a previous intellectual "initiation." I merely contend that it is a mistake to confound these two things, and that in case one has decided to teach children

who have reached the age of reason to practise the virtue of chastity, he cannot leave them in complete ignorance of the object of this virtue.

Upon this point I am in agreement with Dr. Doléris, and probably with all psychologists, but upon this point only. For I do not grant that intellectual initiation in this matter, less even than in any other, has by itself an educational value, and that this initiation ought necessarily to be scientific.

On the contrary, I hope to prove that all intellectual initiation, in big or little doses, is by itself insufficient, and that particularly the scientific initiation which does not appeal to a strong moral education will be not only insufficient, but dangerous.

II. Insufficiency of all Intellectual Initiation

It is a long while since Socrates first maintained that the practice of good is connected with our knowledge as effect to cause. But, since then, experience has contradicted this

theory. Practically, indeed, "the better" does not determine us, and virtue is not to be confounded with the determination of our will by the realizing of "the better" as understood by Leibnitz.

In the eighteenth century the Encyclopedists brought back, in a metaphysical form, this brilliant doctrinal paradox. Ideologists, they denied that customs react upon laws, and maintained that it pertained to laws to reform morals; that it is sufficient to cut off or add a few statutes to change at one stroke the moral appearance of a people.

One of them, Helvetius—the most naïve, we must grant—has even inquired if the differences between the individuals of the human race do not prove a difference in the instruction received; and he asks if virtues, like philosophy or mathematics, cannot be taught. Perhaps one would be tempted to believe that our modern society, so stricken with experiences, has made short work of such utopias. Unfortunately, it has done nothing of the sort. In the majority of our universities, and elsewhere

also, though in a lesser degree, it is still imagined that moral education can be accomplished with text-books and some precepts learned by heart. Let the advocates of such theories read on this subject the excellent work of M. Delvolvé on the two types of education most in vogue to-day: the religious type and the secular type.[8] They will see with what force he denounces the exclusively intellectual character and inefficiency of the secular class.

There is, indeed, a rather generally accepted opinion among secular educators—at least an analysis of official texts relative to moral teaching allows us to affirm this—that the essential function of the educational doctrine is to determine particular duties, to propose them with precision, scientifically to justify them by deducing from their only objective some abstract rules of conduct, without demanding a foundation, more or less exterior, for duty itself, a motive capable of determining the will and, through it, of acting upon the senses.

What has moral education, thus defined in its doctrines and methods, given for practical application? M. Delvolvé asserts that it has afforded a certain disillusionment, and one perceives under his fearless though reserved pen the big word "failure."

No; it does not suffice to know good in order to practise it, nor to enunciate rules based on mere scientific assertions in order efficaciously to influence conduct. To the moral rule which enlightens the intellect it is necessary to join the moral motive which moves the will, and through it bring the senses into subjection. Doubtless the idea expressed in a rule inclines towards the act as indicating the course to follow; but it belongs to the will, under the decisive influence of a motive, to place itself in line for the realization of the idea. The idea seen must become an idea willed; the intellectual concept must become a moving force. Now this can only happen by the will assimilating the idea, and in this process, giving it the force for thus acting, it is necessary to assimilate the rule in question

and strictly to subordinate one's conduct to it. The contribution of voluntary feeling is, in this sense, much more important than intellectual initiation, no matter in what degree.

I add that in all that concerns the practice of chastity, the education of the will is far preferable to the education of the intellect. Of what are we talking, indeed, if not of keeping the senses within the bounds of allowable satisfaction? Certainly, satisfaction of this kind is lawful in marriage. But, outside of marriage, no one can maintain, in the name of science and experience, that a normal individual—that is, one in possession of his liberty—is ever overcome despite himself by the impulses of a physiological instinct. This instinct is not a need, in a strict sense of the word, but merely an aptitude. One can even show in support of this position that its genesis is not physiological, but psychic. The imagination plays a much greater rôle than the senses. Now this observation is important, and fraught with consequences for the point of view we hold.

Indeed, if the sexual instinct, in what concerns the pleasure attached to its exercise, is nourished especially by the imagination, can one understand how training in purity ought to consist entirely in a scientific initiation which has for its effect precisely the awakening of the imagination, of filling it with images capable of feeding this instinct by exciting the senses?

For we should not forget that every emotion which penetrates the field of consciousness inclines to the corresponding act so long as no obstacle intervenes. But where can we find an obstacle in the hypothesis of a scientific initiation pure and simple such as is proposed by Dr. Doléris to the exclusion of the moral education of the will? Are the senses, then, directly subject to the intellect, without the entrance of the will? And will the fact of showing to the eyes of children all the details of the practice of purity be, without anything else, a direct safeguard for their innocence? What simplicity!

I understand very well that one may seek

in sports and hygiene a counterpoise to the possibility of excitement coming from such an exposition, and that one should at the same time denounce to children the dangers of incontinence. But we should not forget, meanwhile, what Foerster remarks, that all teaching of this kind reveals not only dangers but pleasures also, and that to renounce the pleasures it is necessary to possess not only a sufficiently instructed intellect, but a sufficiently strong will.[9]

Now, a strong will is not simply a matter of athletics and hygiene. Even the fear of the dangers that misbehavior contains may disappear completely through the hope of escaping them, by all sorts of means, if the imagination be gripped. In certain regiments, upon the arrival of recruits, the major is called upon to initiate them, without sparing their feelings, into the dangers to which they expose themselves if they indulge in sexual pleasures. Nine times out of ten—and I am not sure that there are any exceptions, or, if there are, that they are due to this official warning—nine

times out of ten the recruits seek out the pleasure, after being previously informed as to the means of avoiding the danger. The mere hope of the pleasure that has been revealed to them, without taking care to strengthen their wills, has captivated them.

To make a will strong there is required an appropriate moral education; that is, an education embracing powerful motives for resisting the attraction of the senses and a methodical training of the will. This is why, I repeat (and I shall return to it again), the education of the will in the field of chastity is far preferable to the education of the intellect. Absolutely speaking, it ought to precede; afterwards, when there is question of an intellectual initiation of children in these matters, it ought always to accompany.

III. Dangers of a Scientific Initiation properly so called

To avoid the dangers that I am going to point out in a scientific initiation pure and

simple, excluding moral education, Dr. Doléris thinks he can range children in two classes—the normal and the abnormal, the majority and the exceptions. The abnormal would be "those unstable natures in whom the precise knowledge of the facts cannot inspire a clear, simple, natural view of sexual life. For these abnormal children (certainly rather numerous), I add, there is needed above all a solid moral education, which alone is capable of preserving them from certain temptations." [10]

But if one denies the distinction and proves that so far as concupiscence is concerned we are all abnormal, what becomes of the thesis of scientific initiation? It falls of itself. Now, in fact, we are all here abnormal; that is, appealing to reason and to faith, we are all born with an "unstable" nature, incapable of resisting, without the help of a naturally, or rather supernaturally, strengthened will, the attractions of sense.

This, then, is what must be established in

order to undermine the scientific method, pure and simple, of initiation.

First, let us consult reason.

The primary point that strikes one upon approaching this question of training to purity is the mysterious and sacred character enveloping it. If we are concerned, for instance, with the problem of alcoholism and some analogous crime, we do not take the same precautions.

Why this difference of attitude?

Dr. Doléris announces this axiom, that the mysterious character attributed by public opinion and by religious faiths to all that concerns the "secret chapter" is nothing but a mere prejudice in no way corresponding with the reality.[11]

However, as M. Durkheim, whose authority is very weighty in these matters, remarks, "if this is a survival, it is a survival from a singularly distant past, and of customs peculiarly tenacious." But when a universal sentiment is persistently affirmed through the whole course of history, we can be sure that it is founded on fact. Ideas of such generality

cannot be due merely to an aberration or to a deceit practised upon mankind for centuries.

Now it is remarkable that not only the Catholic religion, but the most primitive and the most gross religions are unanimous in considering the domain of chastity as a field reserved, and the acts relative to the propagation of the race as important, solemn, religious. It would not enter the mind, therefore, of a well-informed psychologist to treat them flippantly, and to see in the sentiment of modesty which accompanies them merely a prejudice of religious education.

What, then, does this ancient and universal sentiment teach?

It teaches the social importance of these acts that it envelops with mystery. The accomplishment of these acts, and the pleasure attaching to them, pass far beyond individual limits. Consequently, one may ask if the mere idea of these acts and of the unique pleasure which they cause does not place the individuals in a state of manifest inferiority from the point of view of the resistance they are

bound to oppose to them outside of certain legal conditions where their accomplishment and seeking are lawful?

For if it is understandable that an individual resist the pleasure of intoxication or of suicide, which are individual pleasures clearly immoral, it is less to ask that he continually defend himself against the attraction of a pleasure to which nature has attached an unequalled intensity and a wonderful social mission, since it is capable of assuring the perpetuity of the race against designs of the sensual egoism of its members.

I repeat, in the name of science and experience, that the physiological instinct to which these acts and this pleasure correspond is not a need, in the root sense of the word, but simply an aptitude; in other words, it is possible for a young man to guard absolute chastity without blemish. But this is on condition that his will be in a state to resist the idea of sensual pleasure, by the aid of motives stronger even than this pleasure, and by an appropriate moral gymnastic. Now, is this the case

with children and young people whose scientific initiation has advanced faster than the education of the will?

It would be childish to deny that their age and their explosive sensibility place them in a condition of notable inferiority. Not having had the time to acquire strength of will by reflection and exercise, scientific initiation pure and simple risks delivering them, bound hand and foot, to the attractions of sense. They all, under this head, belong to the "abnormal," in that a clear, detailed, and technical conception of the mechanism of sense will not alone guarantee them against falls.

What more is to be said of a theory that deliberately discards moral education and believes in the sovereign efficacy of a scientific initiation? It condemns itself, because it envisages only the "normal" children, while, from the point of view we take, they all—except a few privileged temperaments and up to a certain point—are abnormal.

Moreover, crowds of facts support the teaching of reason. For how otherwise can

we explain the number of "falls" among children, and young people, and well-informed men, than by stating that to resist the sensual attraction they need a well-armed will devotedly attached to a higher ideal of life and trained to duty by persevering exercise?

Whatever it be, we Catholics have no right to hesitate on this point. Our faith makes us believe that in the matter of concupiscence all of us, without exception, are abnormal, and this by heredity, in virtue of the original sin of our first parents that has been transmitted to us and has been re-echoed even in nature itself.

Not only do we not enjoy the privileged state of innocence in which they were created, but we inherit the instability of moral forces that was the result of their fall. We come into the world with this wound, a little like (keeping due proportion) to those children whom neither age nor the vicissitudes of life have had time to corrupt, but who, victims of paternal misconduct, carry upon their foreheads the stigma of vice. By their

troubled and hesitating look they proclaim a physiological defect that makes it harder for them to exercise their liberty.

Try as you will, my readers, you will never succeed in explaining, apart from the doctrine of original sin and its transmission of heredity, how so many men encounter such difficulties in leading a truly human life, in resisting the animal impulses. At least you will meet mysteries much more troublesome than those of original sin. For you must explain how, side by side with those who wallow shamelessly in the mire and almost make us doubt the educative value of the human ideal, there are thousands who in wisdom and morality even surpass the human ideal.

You must tell us why so many martyrs, apostles, and virgins preferred death to any surrender of conscience. For they were made of the same clay as the others. The flame of bad desires encircled their hearts and excited their flesh. Many even among them ascended so high only to fall the lower. Now I defy you to assert and prove that to accomplish

such results it was sufficient to be scientifically initiated into the mysteries of sense. This mere initiation, if it be exclusive, would suffice to explain the fall and misconduct of the others. For is it not St. Paul who has said (evidently in a relative sense) that if the law had not been revealed to the world, man would not have sinned?

The knowledge of the law, the scientific initiation, by themselves will avail nothing. It should be added that it is the education of the will, of which Christianity holds the secret in furnishing the will itself with the most powerful motives for action and the grace which permits the assimilation of these divine motives, in a vital way, by means of charity, that brings the senses into subjection, sows the seeds of divine virtues, and makes to enter into the soul even the slightest rustling of the purifying breath of ideal Beauty.

[1] Bulletin de la Société Française de Philosophie, février, 1911, pp. 29, 99.

[2] *Id.*, p. 31.

[3] *Id.*, p. 30.

[4] *Id.*, p. 31.

[5] *Id.*, p. 32.

[6] *Id.*, p. 32.

[7] To simplify the discussion, we confine ourselves here to the natural virtues, reserving the privilege to speak later on of the supernatural virtues and of the laws of their normal development. It will be clear then why this division is legitimate.

[8] Delvolvé, Rationalisme et Tradition, Paris, Alcan, 1910.

[9] Foerster, L'École et le Caractère, pp. 61 *et seq.*

[10] Bulletin de la Société Française de Philosophie, février, 1911, p. 31.

[11] *Id.*

CHAPTER II

MORAL TRAINING TO PURITY AND THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD

SCIENTIFIC initiation, pure and simple (that, namely, which rejects moral education as a useless appendage), though naturally non-moral, is destined practically to become immoral. We trust that we have enlarged sufficiently upon this point and shown the necessity of a strong moral education.

There is no reason, indeed, why we should not indicate to children in general terms the road to follow in regard to purity, if at the same time we arm their wills to take it. Now, experience teaches—and faith on this point reinforces the teaching of experience—that the wills of children are not naturally prepared to walk without risk or weakness in a sphere so dangerous. The fire of concu-

piscence that smoulders in them on their entrance into this world, and the species of moral instability that is its consequence, place them in a condition of manifest weakness to maintain themselves without effort at the height of a teaching that indicates not only dangers but also pleasures. And the pleasures are such that the prospect of dangers accompanying them is not capable, by itself, of destroying their power of suggestion.

This is something that educators, careful of their responsibility, should not lose sight of when they speak of calling the attention of children to a particularly animal side of their nature. Before enlightening children, however this be done, educators should strive especially to give them the necessary strength. Side by side with the rule that illumines the intellect should come the motive that grips the will and makes it, by a methodical and sustained action, submit to the requirements of the rule and enables it to conquer the senses.

Most educators, both secular and religious, now admit this. But all do not understand

it in the same way. The advocates of a scientific initiation are almost all of the opinion that this initiation necessarily demands a strong parallel moral education. But they are far from agreeing upon the educative value of the motives called in to train the will and to assure, by a persuasive gymnastic, its domination over the senses. Hence I wish in the following pages to prove against secular educators that to be effective, moral education ought to be religious; and, against certain Catholic educators, that an education, properly speaking scientific, is not always a necessary condition for this effectiveness.

I. Moral Education and Chastity; Sexual Pedagogy

AT the outset one may ask how it is possible that some men, otherwise very intelligent, attribute so little importance to moral education in such a delicate field as chastity, yet believe in the omnipotence of science. One's astonishment at such a phenomenon dimin-

ishes when he learns that the decided partisans of a scientific initiation pure and simple are almost all physicians.

The psychology of physicians (at least of those who look upon medicine as more of a science than an art) is generally very simple under the influence of education. Habituated by their office to treat of the most delicate matters from a scientific standpoint, they find, precisely in their exclusively scientific preoccupations, a personal remedy for the dangers that may come from these things for those who have not the same preoccupations. Thence it is not a far cry to speak of science for science's sake, as others speak of art for art's sake, without weighing sufficiently the psychological conditions which oblige the generality of men to envisage things under a more complex aspect. But who does not see the danger of such an attitude, especially in what concerns the training of children to purity?

Let us grant, for the nonce, that science does preserve from harm, and that the scientific

emotion that arises from a clear view of things renders those who enjoy it in some sort immune, by the very fact of their complexity, against whatever noxiousness certain revelations may contain. It is none the less true that a similar "immunity" will be the privilege only of a few specialists, of those precisely for whom science means everything, and who enjoy the scientific emotion at the expense of other emotions, whatever they may be. But what are we to think of those other men who are not actuated by science, and especially of children, who will not be moved by it?

Now or never is the time to recall a truth upon which I have already insisted, and which does not admit of neglect in so serious a matter, namely, that human nature is not intact. One may not believe this truth, but he will be obliged, by scientific loyalty, to bow before the universal fact that it proclaims. In fact, if there are some among us who are sensible to the charms of science, and if from its touch we experience a high and healthy

emotion, there are more of us—even the most of us—who, in the face of certain "realities" that have nothing to do with science, feel, during dark hours from which no one is exempt, certain evil inclinations that the scientific emotion, by itself, cannot neutralize.

It is a general truth that this painful condition is the more evident among children. Science, as such, tells them nothing that avails; and their will, in an embryonic condition, has no power of protecting them against these revelations. To maintain with Dr. Doléris, for example, that to preserve the spirit from surprise and fear and curiosity it is sufficient that the child's intellect, in virtue of a wisely graduated teaching, should be enlightened in advance of the physiological manifestations of the sexual instinct—doubtless this is to show one's self an optimistic theorist, but not a well-informed psychologist.

Foerster has with power and just astonishment raised his voice against such an intellectualist method. "The contemporary champions of sexual education are gravely de-

ceived," he writes, "when they imagine that in our purely intellectualist schools—where the moral aspirations of the child are only poorly and superficially fostered—one can all of a sudden, without any change of teaching, give abundant enlightenment upon the most animal side of our nature and fight these temptations by making a simple appeal to a sense of honor that has not been cultivated, and to a force of will which has never been exercised. It should not be forgotten that all teaching of this kind reveals not only dangers but also pleasures, and that to renounce the pleasures there is required not merely a well-digested knowledge, but a sufficiently strong will." [1]

Now, then, what can give the will the power it needs efficaciously to resist the instinctive impulse of the senses towards these pleasures that can be revealed to them? In the first place, it is necessary to present to the will objective motives capable of concentrating all the powers of love and desire that it holds in reserve, and which only need to be wisely utilized. Because, under the influence of these

motives, whose character of irresistible attraction is well expressed by the term *ideal,* the will undertakes the task, and, by repeated acts generating habits or moral virtues, gives the preference to less special goods which aid it in assimilating more and more of the ideal loved, and in realizing it; that is, in impregnating all its actions with that light and in captivating for its own advantage all the useful energies of human sensibility.

But how are these motives capable of turning aside, for the advantage of the human ideal and the detriment of the animal senses, the immense need of happiness at the root of the will? It is here that the declared advocates of a strong moral education, as a supplement for a scientific teaching about the physiology of sensation, do not agree. Though they unite in asserting the necessity of these motives, they do not all present them in the same way, nor attribute to them the same educative value.

MM. Parodé and Malapert, for example (replying to Dr. Doléris, whose radical and

exclusive intellectualism they reject), think that moral education can be given without appeal to any metaphysics or religious dogma; that, without leaving the domain of nature and passing the sphere of social activity where our individual life flourishes, it is possible to find motives to resist the disorders of sense and to protect children especially against the dangers which attach to the precocious and (according to them) necessary revelations. I am much afraid that they are mistaken and are exposing themselves to serious miscalculations.

The lay school, after twenty years of careful experimenting with the educative value of well-learned motives of human dignity and social justice dear to its partisans, has entirely failed upon this special point—as upon others—to furnish any proofs. Indeed, it would even be easy enough to show this by the facts that it has unearthed.

It is no secret to any one that criminality in general, and juvenile criminality in particular, especially in what concerns sexual moral-

ity, has developed in a distressing fashion in the past years; that is to say, since the development of the secular schools. But let us drop the facts now and see the theory. M. Delvolvé has brought out its inefficiency; and even supposing—what I do not grant—that his arguments are not irrefutable, at least his attempt should have the merit of shaking the unlimited confidence that the systematic adversaries of religious teaching have placed in an exclusively lay education, and should make them more cautious.

Almost all recent students of statistics of crime have given as one of the causes for the recrudescence of crimes among children and adolescents the progressive disappearance of religious teaching, certain of them bearing this testimony even while calumniating religious teaching.[2] Is not this a direct blow at the omnipotence of secular education?

M. Jacob, for example, in his manual of secular morality has finally expressed serious doubts as to the efficiency of his method. We have the proof in one of the letters of the emi-

nent professor to his friends, recently published by M. Bouglé. Here is the most significant passage:

"The labor of revising my course of moral practice does not advance rapidly; in the first quarter I have been able to revise only seven lessons, and I know that they still greatly need being gone over and retouched. The task I am attempting seems more difficult the further on I go. I would treat only of the most simple truths, accessible to the whole world, and yet I hate to mutilate the most complex ideas in simplifying them. Then, too, I must admit that upon certain points I have arrived theoretically at no satisfactory solution. I shall soon have to treat the problem of justice, and to-day I tried to define the notion of justice: it was impossible to get a definition fitting all the cases." [3]

Meanwhile it is upon this notion of justice that MM. Parodé and Malapert flatter themselves principally to rest the moral education of children in the matter of chastity.[4]

I believe, indeed, that this notion of jus-

tice may efficiently serve as a foundation, but on condition of giving it its full value metaphysically and concretely by combining it with the idea of God. Because, apart from this divine foundation, the notion of justice can have only a relative value. Justice, no more than the society on which it is based, has within itself its *raison d'être*. Therefore it is not ultimately but mediately in its name that we can demand of men the practice of continence, regard being had to the claims of society upon the individual and the duties of individuals to society, whose foundations should not be undermined by immorality.

The case is the same with the notions of human dignity and autonomy, upon which some found the most beautiful hopes. Separated from the idea of God, they lose the greater part of their value. Foerster, who is particularly attached to the development of the idea of autonomy as the ultimate motive of moral education, advises us, at the end of his work, that in his opinion this autonomy, to be efficient, ought itself to be based upon a reli-

gious foundation, and he promises a thesis upon this point.

I do not deny that motives drawn from social justice and human dignity may have in themselves a certain educative value. But this much is sure, that this value is pedagogically small. These ideas are too abstract to influence the souls of children and to render wholesome their physical tendencies. In this regard they can do next to nothing.

It may be granted that it is always possible to embody these ideas in facts or in representative men, and in this way to incite imitation, to which children are so inclined. But, in the first place, it would be necessary for all the educators to agree upon the value of these ideas, and upon the men who represent them. Now one knows well enough from experience that the present-day secular educators have not all the same notion of social justice or of human dignity. On the contrary, their ideas on these points are most anarchical, and usually they are much more concerned with political than with moral education.

From the secular point of view, then, we are reduced to a moral education which rests entirely upon motives whose theoretical value is lessened by isolation from their divine source, and whose pedagogical value is practically nil, or almost so. I do not conclude that secular education in itself is to be condemned; but I have a right to conclude that to be really efficient, it ought at least to connect its motives of action with their living source—God. So long as secular education does not do this, and especially so long as it does the contrary and organizes war against God, it is doomed to impotence. One can predict that without being a prophet and without sneering.

Besides the fact that religious teaching has proved its efficiency in training to purity, and that a long experience argues in its favor, it is not useless to recall that part of its absolute educative power comes from its motives and part from the wonderful provision of grace which is placed at the disposal of those wishing to live under its influence.

Theoretically and pedagogically, the motives for moral education invoked by the Catholic Church are irresistible. I shall not insist upon their theoretical value. It is enough to recall that in asking her adherents to act for love of God, whose right to command us is incontestable (since He unites in Himself all the other motives of action as being their only objective *raison d'être*), and in proposing eternal happiness with Him upon condition of our temporarily conforming with His will, the Catholic religion responds to all our capacities for desire, to the tendency to universal happiness which characterizes the human will and which cannot be realized apart from the Infinite.

But to have a real pedagogical value, this universal divine motive with an absolute theoretical value ought to be able to concretize itself. The universal, as such, is abstract, and escapes the comprehension of the child. Hence it is difficult to integrate it to the growing will, and, by the will, to all the tendencies of sense. Now, who has ever gone as

far as the Catholic religion in the "realization" of its motives of action; in other words, of its Ideal?

To us, our God, the very same who rules and vivifies our conduct, is not merely an Idea, but the Supreme Reality. He is Being Itself, say the philosophers. "In Him we are and live and move," proclaims St. Paul. He dwells personally in the souls of the justified, declares the Church. More than that, our God is to us the Incarnate Ideal, the Word made flesh, the God-man; in a word, Christ, in whom are concentrated the Christian teaching and life.

The doctrine of Christ is the centre of the Catholic dogma. Indeed, it is to Christ that all doctrinal ideas lead, and it is from Him that all the means of realizing these ideas, and of living, are derived. He embodies in His person the ideas and the facts. The individual life of the faithful, as the social life of the Church, revolves around Him.

To believe in the person of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, is at the same time to be-

lieve in the Father who sent Him, and in the Spirit of love who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and who has been sent to us by Them.

Belief in Christ is easily instilled in children. The name of Jesus is the first that they murmur at the knees of their mothers. At the name of Jesus, upon awakening, the idea of God takes form in their imagination. Through Him they picture to themselves their heavenly Father, and Mary, their heavenly Mother. At the invocation of the Sacred Name they have an intuition of all that one can expect of them. Because, if Christ is the centre of Catholic doctrine, He is also the model of Christian life.

Every Christian has at his disposal the examples of His life. By them he is urged to the imitation of the divine Model, obliged, as He, to carry each day the cross that God has fashioned to the measure of his weakness or strength. There is not a duty of the individual or social life of which Christ has not given him an example which strikes him and con-

stantly appeals to the sense of his duties towards God, his neighbor, and himself.

The child especially, if he be naturally inclined to imitation, finds in the Child of Nazareth a rival, and it is not hard for those who have charge of his moral education to select portions of the life of Jesus Christ with special reference to purity. This is so much the easier to them, since, not content with being the model of the Christian life, Christ is its ever-flowing spring.

Is He not the Author of grace by which our nature blossoms in living works? And to communicate to us this grace has He not given us sensible signs called Sacraments? Now it is by grace, we know, that we enter into direct and intuitive communication with God, that we experience His presence. This experience of the divine is at the gate of all justified souls and adapts itself to all ages, temperaments, and conditions.

The child who is in a state of grace, but whose intellect has not yet put away the swaddling-clothes of sense, can, after its own fash-

ion, experience God, divine what he cannot understand, feel supernaturally what naturally escapes his intelligence and his faith. And this embraces the essentials of the Christian interior life. As regards worship itself, whether it be interior or exterior, social or individual, is it not all completely organized in virtue of Christ? Is it not possible to give to a child of the tenderest age the beneficent obsession of Jesus? The first sign of religion made by him, under the impulsion of a mother attentive to the best things capable of morally influencing the soul of her child—is it not the sign of the cross? The first formulas that pass his lips, still incapable of clearly expressing them—are they not theological formulas, the "Our Father" and "Hail Mary"? So small that he is hardly capable of anything, the child is already praying, in the morning, at night, after meals. His prayers take—and nothing is more touching—the form of a social duty. He prays for his relatives, for sinners, for the Church.

Without knowing exactly what he says, the child divines what he wishes to say. One gets the impression that he is not alone when praying, he puts so much naïve gravity into his prayers. For him these acts are not as others; he feels them, and spreads around him a vivid sense of the divine.

Of what influence is not a doctrine such as the Catholic capable, when it has at its disposal such means of life, so suitable to the time, and so efficient? We are very far from abstract formulas of human dignity and social justice.

And we have not said all. For if Christ is the eternal spring of the Christian life, He is also its daily food. One will understand that I speak of the Eucharist, the Sacrament *par excellence* of the living, to which all the others are directed. Thanks to the Eucharist, it is allowed us, in the degree of our needs and our desires, to incorporate ourselves with Christ Himself; or, better still, to assimilate ourselves to Him, and, with Him, to assimi-

late all the doctrine and all the life that He concentrates in His person.

The unbelievers and many of the faithful were scandalized or simply agitated when the Holy Father recently extolled Holy Communion for children. But there could be nothing more normal, nor more fatherly, than this deed. If one grants that Christ is the "Spirit of life," why cannot children communicate with the Spirit and partake of this life? Does not their weakness rather plead in favor of this solution? The Christ whom they receive would help them, in their own default, to remedy their weakness by an abundance of grace appropriate to their state. Living in Christ since their childhood, they will be less tempted, when the time comes, to seek their life elsewhere. When their senses awake, the living joy which will come from an habitual contact with God will guarantee them against the seduction of pleasures, especially of the imagination. Their moral education upon these points will be more

easily accomplished, and the special teachings deemed opportune will find them already prepared to receive them.

I do not wish to pretend that this life of grace before nature has been able to give any true signs of life absolutely guarantees children against all danger of falling. But it is clear that there will be marvellously prepared in them the habit of acting according to grace, which acts—and this without contradiction—only in conformity with the laws of nature.

A Christian education thus organized, with such motives for action and such means of life, enables the young man to strengthen himself by reflection upon such powerful motives and by the use of such efficient means.

Dr. Doléris has pretended that the Church has failed in her mission regarding education to purity. Doubtless he intended to say that there are many Catholics at the present moment who are not chaste. Granted; but is not this precisely because they are not really

Catholics, but such only in name? What does this prove? Absolutely nothing, if it be shown that Catholics who really live according to their faith and use the means of life it affords never find it too hard to acquire and preserve the virtue of purity. Thank God, there are still many such. If Dr. Doléris has a love for the truth, let him make a serious investigation of our institutions and colleges and religious houses, and our families, and he will be edified upon this point.

Given a Christian education, in the integral way in which I understand it, from the cradle, it is impossible for a child, arrived at the age when revelations become necessary, not to be armed effectually to resist the sensual excitation which may come to him from these very revelations conjointly with the crisis of puberty through which he must pass. The question now is to know what one should reasonably understand by "revelations," and, for example, if it be necessary that they should be of the scientific kind.

II. Moral Education and Scientific Initiation

MANY educators, secular and religious, we have already remarked, are advocates of a scientific education of children regarding the problem of purity. Some urge an individual scientific education, the duty of imparting which will be incumbent upon the parents; others advocate a collective education, and are willing to confide it to specialists, and even to physicians. This is, in particular, the opinion of Dr. Doléris, but he is not the only one to sustain it. Dr. Toulouse is of the same view. M. Durkheim agrees that the scientific initiation proposed by Dr. Doléris is necessary, but that moral education should be added.[5] This is also the opinion of M. Parodé. I make an exception of M. Malapert, because of a conference given by him upon this subject, when he understood collective education in purity otherwise than the fanatics of science.[6] In short, a large number of lay persons and many physicians,

among whom are the most influential members of the Société Française de Prophylaxie Sanitaire et Moral, favorably regard the institution of technical and collective teaching relative to the "secret chapter."

But it is not only seculars that consider the question of such teaching. Some religious educators agree, with the reservation that the teaching should be strictly individual and not collective. Such is the view of Abbé Fonssagrives, who asks that religious teachers associate with themselves in this work scientific counsellors "who can corroborate, supplement, and complete this teaching."[7] But he vigorously opposes the proposal of Dr. Burlureaux and Professor Pinard to make the teaching collective. "We believe," he writes, "that lectures delivered to young people on so delicate a subject will go directly against the moral object that the lecturer would have in view."[8] Indeed, Abbé Fonssagrives elsewhere, speaking of individual scientific teaching, calls it hardly more than a sane notion of hygiene, and we do not blame him. He

quotes Bacon, "Propriety is purity of the body," and recalls that religion and hygiene have interests in common.

But others are more exacting than Abbé Fonssagrives. Speaking especially of young girls, Mme. Adhémar says: "When physiological phenomena announce new functions, the educator ought to explain them scientifically, as a fact of the natural order, without going into useless analysis." [9]

These opinions, and others that we refrain from quoting, have had the effect of arousing the imagination of certain educators, equally Christian, such as MM. Barbier and Holland. One will find the expression is "shaded" to suit their idea in the *Critique du Libéralisme.*[10] Perhaps it is just to think that they might have been able to see the question with more calmness, and especially more objectivity, and that having to fit the conclusions of Abbé Fonssagrives and M. Édouard Montier to those of the principal collaborators of the masonic review, *Acacia,* they should have known that, the principles not

being the same on both sides, the conclusions could hardly resemble each other except in appearance.

In short, when MM. Fonssagrives and Montier [11] propose a scientific education in purity for young men and young women, it is on the express condition of associating that education with an integral religious teaching. Now I am not aware that the editors of the *Acacia* have ever had this idea. It follows that one cannot without injustice submit the opinions of the one and the other to the same anathema. Because this would be to do to the integral Christian education the injury of thinking that it places the children who receive it in the same position of inferiority, in regard to certain revelations, as those who, by deliberate purpose, have been deprived of it, if indeed they have not been forewarned against it.

Besides, Abbé Fonssagrives, to speak only of him, forcefully rejects all idea of a collective scientific teaching to be given to children on these delicate matters; whereas free-

masons and freethinkers, without thought of the modesty of the children, or of the circumstances of age or sex or environment, insist upon the necessity and universality of such teaching.

Finally, the religious educators, advocating a certain scientific initiation of children into the problem of purity, not only wish it to be individual, but reduce it to a minimum. Abbé Fonssagrives restricts it to counsels of hygiene. M. Montier asks parents to use, together with clearness and accuracy, all necessary prudence and reserve. He wishes that parents should take notice of the conditions under which the question presents itself to the child, which is very far from pretending that they are bound to present it, even before it arises, at random and out of place.

There is, then, more than a difference of attitude between secular and religious educators; there is a complete opposition to scientific education in purity when this education would demand on the part of parents and children a technical knowledge of the func-

tions which belong to the organs of generation, or, again, of the physiological consequences resulting from their normal or abnormal exercise.

This technical knowledge could only be imposed, in my opinion, upon the assumption that educators would be forced to choose between this and the method of absolute ignorance, which certain theorists still defend by way of reaction against all scientific initiation. Up to a certain point I admit that one can theoretically prefer the method of silence to that of any sort of intellectual initiation, even in a small dose, that does not rest upon a strong moral education. We shall shortly explain ourselves on this controverted point. But in practice, considering the way in which the problem of educating to purity now presents itself, I would without scruple sacrifice ignorance to knowledge, upon the well-understood condition that the scientific teaching should always be preceded and accompanied by an integral Christian education.

Fortunately, we are not reduced to this ex-

tremity. Between the method of scientific initiations and rigorous silence there is room for a progressive intellectual initiation, adapting itself to an infinity of circumstances of age, sex, temperament, and environment, and which compels us to view educating to purity much less as a question of science than one of art.

We shall explain shortly the way in which it seems to us that at present this art of training to purity, as the basis of intellectual initiation, in the large sense of the word—that is, varying between common sense inclusively and scientific initiation exclusively—ought to be organized. It will be sufficient for the time being briefly to enumerate the reasons why I believe an individual or collective scientific education is neither necessary nor possible.

The first requirement for a good training in purity is that it should be accessible to all the natural educators of the child, and to the children themselves. Now, who would maintain that all parents are fitted to give, and all children to receive, a scientific education

upon so delicate and special a point? Is it not a notorious fact that a large number of parents do not know even the simplest and most elementary and most general laws of infant hygiene? A Dutch statistician, M. Ramaer,[12] has proved that, in the single country of Holland, where in the last few years the Catholic population has dropped from thirty-nine to thirty-five per cent., the phenomenon is to be attributed to infant mortality. Now, this mortality is due in a large measure, it appears, to a complete ignorance of the laws of hygiene. Under such circumstances, how can we require parents to know and apply scientifically to their children laws peculiar to the present problem and whose existence they do not even suspect?

Some one may answer, perhaps, that the evil is not without remedy, and that for a solution it suffices to initiate the new generations into the knowledge and scientific application of these laws. Nothing is truer, and I here express my desire for the creation in the schools of a new branch of education

where a large part of the time will be given entirely to elementary hygienic prescriptions. But to be scientific this teaching should be addressed only to young men and young women who are already formed and in a position to know the bearing of these facts; that is, at an age when the great majority of children have left school.

Besides, supposing that the problem were one day solved for the parents, it would still remain to be solved for the children, and it is their education in purity that is the precise point at issue now. Are children, indeed, at the tender age when generally the crisis of puberty proposes troubling questions to them, capable of appreciating the import of a scientific education on these questions? Some, perhaps, but certainly not the majority. If, then, it is possible, without going into the matter with scientific precision and yet without being constrained to maintain their ignorance, to enlighten them, I do not see why one should not be satisfied with this middle position, where common sense and tact are called upon

to play a large rôle, and which has the rare merit of being within the reach of all parents and of all children.

Now this is possible if parents are sufficiently (though not scientifically, in the strict sense of the word) instructed to apply to their children the essential laws of hygiene, and also to satisfy their need of knowing certain things, whenever this need appears, without entering into technical details that many would be unable to give and which would be superfluous to most children. I cannot give the whole of this method now, but I hope that a later development will be satisfactory.

The scientific education in purity so much vaunted by certain secular educators and by physicians—timidly proposed by some religious educators, too, because of the deplorable consequences that they fear, in this stream of evil revelations, from a prolonged ignorance —this scientific education, I say, not being accessible to the majority of parents or of children, cannot be proposed as a necessary and universal method. Perhaps it can be given

sometimes by some parents and to some children under certain circumstances, but the exception proves the rule.

So much for individual scientific education in purity. What are we to think of a collective education?

Let us remember that Dr. Doléris would instruct even the youngest children in the smallest technical details of the phenomena of generation, even in advance of the awakening of sexual instincts, "so that neither fear nor surprise may seize the spirit when those organs manifest their vitality, and with these manifestations awake the senses and imagination."

Poor children! Let us leave them at peace on this point as long as possible, and not cause them the pain consequent upon filling their little heads with indigestible ideas. Let us stake everything on the methodic and progressive formation of their will. That is the important thing.

If, instead of spoiling children and yielding to their every whim, we accustom them from the cradle to restraint, to obedience, pa-

tience, a mastery of their nerves; if we infuse into them a sense of duty, and of the sacrifices that it implies, utilizing for this all the resources of the Christian life and teaching, we shall have more chance of solving the problem of educating to purity, when it inevitably presents itself, than if we had crammed them with the "natural sciences."

Besides, if the question of a collective scientific teaching be proposed, it would be necessary to exclude the "very young" and to restrict it to adolescents of fifteen or eighteen years, whose senses and imagination are awake. But does the question so present itself?

In the first place, it would be necessary to reserve this technical teaching for the élite of the adolescents, who have already been "equilibrated" by a strong moral education, and who would see, behind the scientific appearance enveloping the facts, the moral value of the ideas conveyed. For the others, those whose wills have not been trained and who have no control over their imagination, would certainly not escape the peril inherent in a

teaching that undoubtedly implies dangers, but also reveals pleasures—and what pleasures!

Even reduced to these proportions, is a collective scientific education possible? I believe not. Those who have had experience with young people at the time of indecision and trouble know well enough that the "best" suffer by being occupied in common with questions touching the animal side of our nature. They lose their self-respect, to which they cling most tenaciously when alone, but which escapes them as soon as they are brought together in a crowd.

Human respect is a curious chapter in the psychology of crowds. From a false sense of honor, young people especially try to appear unchaste in the eyes of their companions and to believe their comrades are so. Explain this who can, the fact remains that it exists, and any scientific teaching regarding purity that does not take this into account is inevitably doomed to failure.

Does this mean that, in the field of purity,

all collective teaching should be banished *a priori?* Yes, if there is question of a scientific teaching given indifferently to all young people, and even if restricted to the élite. No, if one intends a moral teaching, the character of which precisely envelops and sweetens the technical crudity. I think that collectively as well as individually there are ways of speaking clearly of chastity and of the conditions of its loss or gain, without giving to the teaching the allurement of a course in medicine or a treatise on gynecology. This I shall explain in due time.

Nothing remains now, in concluding this chapter, except to treat of one little question whose importance will not escape my readers. That is the question of books, of those which speak of "all that a young man or a young woman should know." At the risk of appearing "narrow," I am not afraid to say that this bookish solution of the problem of educating to purity is not a solution at all, and that in practice it defeats the purpose proposed by its advocates.

Indeed, it is the same with technical books as with collective scientific teaching, if their danger is not even greater. For the book, taking no account of the relative moral value of its readers, places a dangerous instrument of education in the hands of the young. Even the best among them are tempted to read such books, as they read their dictionaries at school, for other motives than those of instruction. And this is not to do an injustice to young folks, but to defend them against themselves on this point. It is very easy to remember that in them, as in others, human nature is not intact, and that because of their youth they are apt to forget this. It is the duty rather of parents and confessors to read these books, to meditate upon them, to correct them, to tone down the technical harshness, and to adapt them to the use of adolescents.

[1] Foerster, L'École et le Caractère, pp. 61 *et seq.*

[2] Duprat, La Criminalité dans l'Adolescence, p. 100.

[3] Jacob, Lettres d'un Philosophe, par P. Bouglé.

[4] Bulletin de la Société Française de Philosophie, février, 1911.

[5] Durkheim, Bulletin de la Société Française de Philosophie, février, 1911.

[6] Malapert, La Morale Sexuelle à l'École, in the Revue de l'Éducation, mars, 1909.

[7] Fonssagrives, L'Éducation de la Pureté, p. 56, 5th ed.

[8] *Id.*, p. 59.

[9] D'Adhémar, La Nouvelle Éducation de la Femme dans les Classes Cultivées.

[10] November 15, 1910; September 15, December 15, 1911.

[11] Montier, De l'Éducation Sociale et Sentimentale des Filles.

[12] Religie in Verband met Politick in Nederland, 1909.

CHAPTER III

THE METHOD OF SILENCE AND THE METHOD OF COMMON SENSE

AMONG those who are at present occupied with the problem of educating to purity we have seen that there are warm partisans of a scientific initiation pure and simple. According to them, it suffices to reveal to children, without distinction of age or sex, all the technique of the "secret chapter" in order to enable them to avoid all the dangers. The scientific light would in this case play a rôle ordinarily reserved for the moral force. Unfortunately this method has no practical value. By not taking into account the general and individual psychological conditions that characterize children in regard to purity, it goes directly against the end proposed. It disarms the will under pretext of enlightening it.

The will, indeed, has more need of strength than of light, though it has need of both. But it is not the light that gives it strength. The strength of the will, and especially its mastery over the senses, comes from sentiments inspired by irresistible motives of action, and from a persevering action sustained by these sentiments.

To pretend, then, in the difficult field of chastity, to substitute for a preliminary training of the will a precocious education of the intellect is to upset the conditions of the problem and to expose the children to the very dangers from which we wish to protect them. The fact is that on this point nothing can replace a strong moral education of the will, and, in particular, an integral religious education. This, we submit, we have sufficiently proved.

But once admit the necessity of this moral education of the will for all children without exception, and that from the cradle, and another question not less important claims the attention of educators, whether these be

parents or confessors, or those who have replaced these for the child.

Here is the question.

Can one so far presume upon the moral strength of children, gained by an integral religious education, as to give them, individually and collectively, a technical instruction in all the details concerning the exercise of chastity?

Or, if this scientific education be useless and dangerous, is it necessary to recur to the method of silence; that is to say, to put off indefinitely, in all cases and no matter what the circumstances, the hour of necessary revelations?

We have already called attention to the danger and uselessness of individual or collective technical teaching. It is enough to recall here that all the natural educators of the child are not capable of giving, nor all the children of receiving, this teaching; and this alone would be sufficient to condemn it.

But, from the fact that everything about chastity is not to be told even to well-bred

children, does it follow that nothing at all should be told? Between the method of a precocious and technical initiation and the method of absolute silence is there room for no other method?

Some educators think so. According to them, the true principle in the matter of training to purity is that of silence and not initiation.

This is not our opinion. On the contrary, we believe that, on principle (apart from rare exceptions), a certain systematic individual initiation—let us call it the method of common sense—always has greater educative value than the method of silence, upon the well-understood condition that we are speaking of children brought up in a Christian manner, and for whom, some time or other, the question of initiation may demand an answer; and upon the condition, further, that the initiation be individually adapted to the present needs of such or such a child.

We believe, besides, that practically, in the actual social conditions, where the greater

part of the children are involuntarily and almost fatally exposed to a vicious initiation, the method of silence, proposed as a general method of education, would be extremely dangerous.

I. The Method of Silence for Training to Purity

LET us repeat, to avoid all misunderstanding, that the children whose innocence it is proposed to safeguard individually are Christian children who have had the advantage, in their family, at church, or at school, of the integral religious education of which we have spoken. They have arrived at the age of adolescence; that is, at the age (evidently varying greatly between child and child) when, under the influence of profound physiological transformations, certain difficulties regarding the practice of chastity may present themselves to their souls.

In this case what should the educators do?

If there were question, indeed, of children

whose moral education had been nil or incomplete, the problem of initiation or non-initiation would not present itself. Before dreaming of opening their eyes or of keeping them closed upon the data of a problem such as that of purity, which engages their moral activity, it would be necessary first, without delay, to place their will in a condition of legitimate defence, by a special education, including both the culture of sentiments proper to their age and the practice of the corresponding duties.

Besides, the problem of training in purity should be confined to those children who have been blessed with a strong moral education, and whose will, already habituated, under the inspiration of high religious motives and profound sentiments, to resist the whims of the senses, finds itself able, when the occasion arises, to make head against the special difficulties that may come from revelations relative to the peculiar practice of chastity.

In reality, this case should be that of all children in our Christian families, if their

parents and superiors well understood their duties as educators, and neglected nothing, from the cradle up, effectually to prepare them for all the eventualities of a life of sense.

In this case, and in this case alone, is it better, on principle, for as long as possible and by all means to maintain ignorance where there are still some "mysteries" of chastity, even though one sees that the question is on the point of presenting itself to their awakened imagination!—or is it preferable not to evade the question, and to reply frankly and clearly, but without going into useless technical details, and measuring one's answer exactly to the need of the child?

The whole question is there.

I have already noted that certain educators are rather inclined, even at this decisive moment for the future of a child, to tie tighter the bandage of ignorance, under the specious pretext of preserving its innocence.

The reason that they give is that "it is not advisable to expose a child to a certain danger through a doubtful motive." "Now, on

the one hand," they say, "it is very hard to determine with certainty when it is necessary to make these revelations to a child; whereas, on the other hand, the most renowned educators affirm that every anticipated revelation which is not necessary creates a danger that would not otherwise exist."

Doubtless, "it is very hard to determine with certainty when it is necessary to make these revelations to a child"; but the uncertainty exists only in theory, in the question of determining at what exact age these revelations ought to be given to all children, without distinction.

In practice, parents who follow their children closely and by a well thought out moral education have succeeded in gaining their confidence, ordinarily have not this uncertainty. And one can say the same thing of the confessor who has applied himself to know his young penitent thoroughly, and has trained him to open to him his daily needs.

The claim that "every anticipated revelation which is not necessary creates a danger that

would not otherwise exist," is another matter. The objection is poorly put.

For we are not exactly concerned with the making of anticipated and unnecessary revelations to children, but with determining whether it is or is not necessary, at a certain moment in the evolution of a child—for example, at the crisis of puberty and when its imagination is in a ferment—to make these anticipated revelations.

Again I repeat that there is question here only of well-bred children and of parents or superiors having the duty of fitting the Christian education of their will to the continually increasing demands upon their young intellectual and moral activity. It is only in regard to these children that one can legitimately ask if all anticipated revelation, measured exactly by the natural educators of the child, having a knowledge of his personal needs and the circumstances of his life, "creates a danger that would not otherwise exist."

For the day will at last come, even though

the child grow up with blindfold eyes in the most wholesome conditions of interior and exterior life, when the bandage of ignorance will inevitably fall from his eyes.

Let us grant that this is as late as possible—at eighteen, for instance. Well, then, I ask if, at this moment, the young man whose innocence has been safeguarded by an exceptional ignorance of the difficulties surrounding the practice of chastity will be in a better condition to acquire this virtue than the child who, informed sooner of such difficulties by its parents or spiritual masters, will have already passed four or five years in practising and developing this virtue?

We should not deceive ourselves with words in such a question of importance. All the world agrees that there is innocence and innocence. There is the negative innocence that is not the virtue of chastity, and a positive innocence which is confused with it. The one is preserved in an atmosphere of ignorance, the other is born and grows under the sun of truth.

We should make a mistake to oppose one to the other, as if in every state of the case the first were preferable to the second, or the second to the first.

There is a time when negative innocence forces itself on one. This is in the first moral preparation of the child, when the general education of his will is far preferable to a precocious education of his intellect upon a delicate point which does not yet interest him, and in regard to which he is not sufficiently armed. For how many years this period of moral preparation, this kindergarten of chastity, ought to continue, no one can determine *a priori*. This depends upon the competency of the parents and the precocity of the child.

But we suppose a child who is, morally speaking, as well prepared as possible, and whose will, from his tenderest infancy, has been habituated to resist his growing passions, to subdue his anger, to conquer his laziness, to bridle his desire of independence, to fight against softness, jealousy, vanity, and other moral disorders which are found in em-

bryo in all children. It is understood that in regard to chastity this child has guarded his innocence, and this is not yet placed in question.

But now suddenly the crisis of puberty comes on.

Under the dominion of physiological transformations of which he is not the master, he undergoes sensible impressions whose nature he does not understand; a sort of moral languor invades his whole being; his imagination, until then taken up with realities and glutting itself with things, becomes excited in sleep; at irregular intervals his heart is suffocated with anguish and his mind oppressed with presentiments. He who never had a care begins to be anxious about everything.

Doubtless he does not yet seek very far under the words he hears, the pictures he sees, the silence he observes. But still he does seek. He loses the beautiful carelessness regarding everything that was as the radiation of his innocence, the limpid clearness of his look, the naïveté of his words and gestures. In short,

he passes from childhood to adolescence. Now, in the opinion of all educators, this transition is not without danger. This is why one may ask if this is not the time to make the passage also from negative innocence, where he has lived, to positive innocence, where he is called to live; and if the chastity that he can be made to acquire in knowledge of the cause, with all the precautions due to his age and inexperience, will not be of much greater assistance to him than that which he has practised until now, without taking account of the matter?

To reply to this question it is necessary to say a word about the virtue of chastity among adolescents and adults. Chastity, declare the theologians, is a virtue whose object is to bind the senses to the demands of reason in the domain of sensible emotions, in order to keep them from degenerating into sensual emotions, which, sought for themselves, excite the flesh at the expense of the spirit.

The exercise of this virtue evidently supposes in him who practises it a certain knowl-

edge of its object. To govern by the light of reason, under the impulsion of a right will, sensible emotions whose development does not always depend on us, it is necessary for us in a certain way to have passed through these emotions. At the least, there is required a concept in order to concentrate upon it our ideas, and to acquire, by the repetition of contrary acts, the habitual force which permits the will to master the emotions, and to resist them upon the slope of special and violent joys where they would hurry it on.

But it is clear that the knowledge of these emotions of the flesh, since a word, an image, or a sensible impression may arouse a continuous stream of emotions in the adolescent, cannot by itself be a guarantee against them. The knowledge of the object of chastity does not cause in us the corresponding virtue; it is only a condition of its acquisition and development.

And, further, this condition is only realized if the will is exercised on a subject regarding which it has been previously prepared to

resist all the suggestions of sense, even before suspecting the existence of those pertaining to chastity.

What, then, gives to chastity the power of becoming this habitual force of resistance to the carnal emotions in a young man who is passing from childhood to adolescence, from negative to positive innocence? Ordinarily it is the repetition of corresponding acts of chastity.

It is the same, indeed, with habits of soul as with habits of body. They are acquired and strengthened by exercise. By repeating movements and applying his body to exercise, a soldier acquires the muscular resistance and nimbleness that make him strong. Similarly, moral strength is gained by bending his will and his sensible tendencies, by the repetition of such acts naturally.

The virtue of chastity is not an exception to this law.

We have already recalled that the idea, thought, or sensation inclines to the corresponding act, and that this inclination ex-

presses itself by a corresponding impulse of the rational or animal appetite, otherwise called the will or the senses.

Each one of our ideas is joined to a sensation. To the sensation corresponds an instinctive impulse, a natural tendency to realize the act represented by this sensation, so long as no obstacle intervenes. Cataleptics, hysterical and nervous persons, whose will momentarily sleeps, are thus at the mercy of the sensations one suggests to them, or which penetrate to the field of their consciousness. It is the same with normal persons, and particularly with children, whenever their will is powerless to dominate their instinctive movements of sense.

Smothered in sensation from childhood, the struggle for the ideal life can save us from becoming slaves. Our first contact with things is a sensible contact. Even our highest ideas are bound up with sensations. Hence the difficulty of escaping the automatic fruition of sensible inclinations and of acts that follow from them.

The mere natural tendency to seek moral good that we find in ourselves at birth, and which Baptism accentuates, does not enable the will easily to resist impulses of the senses. This tendency must be strengthened by acts, I would say by continual desires, especially during youth, which is at the same time the age of strongest sense impressions.

If, then, ideas as well as sensations incline the will to the acts that they represent, the art of education will consist in implanting early in the domain of conscience the ideas that one wants realized—as, for instance, that of chastity—and in driving away at the same time the contrary ideas.

And since there are no ideas that are not bound up with sensations, without a corresponding impulse of the sensible appetite, the voluntary repetition of these same acts will indissolubly associate all these elements: the ideas with sensations, those with sensible tendencies with the will, so that the free will, by an easily understood counter-attack, helps itself by the spontaneous impulses of sense that

it will have limbered and organized, and so realizes, as if naturally, the end proposed.

For if experience shows that every idea, in all consciousness, tends to provoke action, it does not the less show that the act provoked by the idea, when it is methodically repeated, in its turn accentuates the idea's power of excitation. It is in this way that manias and vicious habits of all sorts are engendered.

Why? Because not only does the repetition of an act suppress the possible resistance of the faculty acting, but creates in it new tendencies to action, a need, in some sort natural, of action in such or such a direction.

Suppose, then, that in place of having an automatic fruition of our tendencies under the influence of ideas or of sensations, we make this fruition voluntary—in other words, that we prepare and determine it in favor of chosen and specified moral ideas—the facility of placing the act correlative to these ideas will be the same, materially speaking, but their moral value will have changed.

Being free, they will have a human value;

being easy, they will create, even by their repetition, in the faculties that produce them, the moral habits called virtues.

One sees now where this analysis leads, in the subject under consideration. In a child whose parents have early prepared him, under the luminous influence of Christian ideas and of the example of Christ, who has embodied them in a living fashion, to will, think, speak, and act conformably to these ideas and to the example of the divine Model, it will not be very difficult, when the time comes, to implant the idea of purity.

It will suffice artfully to disengage him from the sense impressions themselves that the child experiences in the crisis of puberty, and by means of well-chosen expressions and images to proportion the content to the ordinarily unexacting mentality of a child.

The value, already proved by him, of the divine motives that he has for regulating his thoughts, his words, his sentiments, and his acts upon the life and example of Jesus Christ, of the Infant Saviour; his will's power of re-

sistance acquired upon all the difficult points where he will have been brought to concentrate his efforts; the suppleness of sensibility that a virile education will have helped to give him: all this will carry him, as if naturally, towards the ideas of purity which little by little will be suggested to him, and it will help him to realize them.

As if naturally, I have said, because of the habitual character that clothes the virtue of chastity, acquired by the repetition of the acts, since it is incontestable that the habit, relatively to its object, is in us as a second nature.

But this does not exclude the supernatural concurrence of grace. On the contrary, if you reflect that, in a Christian soul acting under the impulse of divine motives of conduct, grace penetrates its activity to the marrow and supernaturalizes it; if you have not lost sight of the fact that the natural gymnastic proper to education in purity finds its necessary and efficacious complement in the daily practice of supernatural exercises, such as prayer and the Sacraments: then you will

without difficulty understand what power of resistance in the struggle to maintain his innocence a young man will have who has passed in this Christian way from childhood to adolescence, from negative to positive innocence.

Certainly he will be better armed upon the dangerous ground of chastity, where he will fight wisely, than the adolescent of the same age whose negative innocence, maintained by ignorance, hardly permits him to suspect the difficulties of the struggle, and will find him prepared in a way far from suitable to conquer them.

Reared in a Christian way, he will assuredly be in a better condition than the child reared at haphazard to resist the allurements of sense and the vicious suggestions from without, on the day when, willy-nilly, the scales of ignorance will fall from his eyes. But he will be less prepared than the youths of whom we shall speak, voluntarily chaste, informed long since against the surprises of sense, and habituated to prevent or to repress them.

This, therefore, is the question from the point of view of educating in purity.

Between the uncertain and relative peril of a measured and progressive initiation, at the hour when the crisis of puberty appears in some way on the lips of the child, or in its eyes, or in its attitude towards disturbing questions, and the quasi-absolute security which attaches to the virtue of chastity in a young man normally initiated by his parents or his confessor, has one the right to hesitate an instant?

Yes, reply the fearless partisans of the method of silence. Because, in the transition from negative to positive innocence the peril of initiation, as uncertain and relative as one chooses, is put off no longer. The least spark may produce a sensual explosion in the child.

This would occur, indeed, if—to continue the figure—the powder of sense were not guarded.

We have been the first to recall that, because of original sin and the natural weakness of the will, the moral organism of a child finds

itself in unstable equilibrium. We have even called it "instability," and maintained, against Dr. Doléris, in the light of faith and of experience, that in regard to chastity all children should be considered as abnormal.

But there is a way of remedying this original "anomaly," and of giving stability to the organism. It suffices for this to find the most that is possible for the moral education of the child, and to habituate his will, under the objective excitation of divine motives and with the subjective concurrence of grace, by the incessant repetition of virtuous acts proportioned to his weakness, to dominate his sensibility, and to place him in face of it as a vigilant and armed sentinel, capable of preventing every explosion. What Christian child cannot his parents or teachers or confessor prepare for this condition?

If this previous moral education were impossible, it would mean despair of nature and of grace. Fortunately, experience has proved its possibility, and that in a very great degree. Therefore, in regard to children thus

stable and well brought up, can one still, at the crisis of puberty and the formidable transition from childhood to adolescence, from negative to positive innocence, raise the scarecrow of initiation?

The danger—if danger there be—seems to us more theoretical than practical.

For, on the one hand, no matter how we speak or act, there will come a day, whether it be at thirteen or fifteen or twenty years, when the child who knows nothing ought to know; and, on the other hand, the initiation of which we speak has nothing in common with a technical initiation, which, by its very crudity, easily plays the rôle of explosive.

It is not necessary, indeed, to determine theoretically the age and the amount of initiation. This is, on the contrary, a question exclusively practical, and relative to the infinite variety of circumstances which characterize the biological and psychological evolution of children.

Let us take some particular child—boy or girl—in a Christian family, and therefore

well brought up; let us take him at the age when he is passing through the crisis of puberty; let us suppose, in virtue of this crisis, and of signs easily recognizable by an experienced and sympathetic regard, that certain questionings are presenting themselves to his spirit and his imagination, and let us ask ourselves if it is truly a peril to reply, taking account in each particular case of the mentality of the child; or if the peril will not be greater to wish to delay indefinitely, and to leave to chance the care of substituting itself for the guidance of the educators?

Certain educators reply to this, that in a matter of such importance it is much better to trust to God than to men, and, in default of the natural virtue of chastity which is acquired by human acts with a knowledge of the case, to count upon the corresponding supernatural virtue which God Himself infuses into the souls of children at Baptism, which He directly increases in them during the course of their life unless they fail, and which, because of its divine transcendence, is advan-

tageously called upon to replace the natural virtue.

Let us see what is to be thought of this explanation.

II. Reciprocal Influence of Nature and of Grace in Educating to Purity

THIS, then, is what prompts certain educators to delay as long as possible the danger of any initiation whatsoever in the matter of chastity. Every moral virtue, they say, such as temperance, patience, purity, is at the same time a natural or acquired virtue and an infused or supernatural virtue.

As a natural virtue, it is acquired by the repetition of its acts. As a supernatural quality, the same moral virtue has an entirely different source. It is infused into the soul in Baptism by the Holy Spirit. Anterior to all exercise, it is not by exercise that it grows, but by the same principle which gave it birth —the Holy Ghost.

There is much truth in this analysis of the

natural and supernatural virtues. But if it were entirely correct, there would be reason, in its name, of opposing every method of initiation in the domain of purity. Because there would be nothing to do, under this hypothesis, except to refer directly to God the care of increasing in children the supernatural virtue of chastity, and of proportioning the power of resistance to the needs of preserving their innocence in an atmosphere of dense ignorance. All initiation, even painless, would be useless, and parents would have nothing to do but cross their arms.

But is this analysis exact?

We believe that not only is it incorrect theoretically, but that it is dangerous practically.[1]

Evidently these educators confuse the objective relations that sustain the supernatural virtues with the corresponding natural virtues and their subjective conditions of realization.

It is very true that the supernatural virtues and the natural virtues have not the same object, although they are practised upon the

same matter. The latter helps us to realize an ideal of an honorable man; the former, on the contrary, are designed to "make us gods." Consequently, one may very truthfully maintain that the natural virtues are acquired and grow by the repetition of appropriate acts, whereas the supernatural surpass nature at every point.

But is the direct and divine increase of the supernatural virtues, like their origin, unconditional? Can one maintain that God augments the supernatural virtues in us without our co-operation, or, in other words, that there is no way, by exercise, in which they grow?

Doubtless the exercise of the supernatural virtues is not the cause of their increase, since it is God who directly augments them. But does He unconditionally augment them in us, or on condition that we exercise them?

If this were true, if the doctrine of the parallelism of the virtues were exact, what influence could grace have on nature? How could be effected this vital incorporation of

Christian truth with our tendencies which is a necessary condition of its efficiency?

Virtue, whether supernatural or natural, is merely a determination of our active powers —intelligence, will, or sensation. It modifies them, naturally or supernaturally, in the sense of the object that it proposes; it condenses or concentrates their activity upon a precise point, instead of abandoning them to their original indetermination.

But who does not see that virtue, thus subjectively viewed, is inseparable from the faculty that it modifies or determines; that if it matters little, in theory, whether it be given supernaturally by God at first, or whether it be acquired naturally by us, it is on the contrary incomprehensible, in practice, that virtue be developed apart from the power or the faculty which is endowed with it?

Besides, this is not to say that God does not directly increase in us the supernatural virtues, but only that He does not so increase them except on condition that we exercise them, and that, under the impulse of charity,

we posit without ceasing virtuous acts of the intellect, the will, and the senses, more and more intense and meritorious.

In a child who has not yet reached the age of reason, and on this account does not posit human acts of the will, the supernatural virtues received in Baptism ordinarily do not grow. When, however, he reaches the age of reason, God augments these virtues in him in proportion to the virtuous acts which he produces under the doubly illuminating influence of his reason and of his faith, and under the warm impulsion of charity.[2]

The question, then, is not to know if the divine power, under the species of the supernatural virtues, is all-powerful in itself and for the service of God; it is too evident that it is. But does it keep this omnipotence for our service, and, if so, on what conditions?

Under the hypothesis, repugnant to common sense, that God, in giving us His grace, has reserved to Himself the care of working out our salvation, without requiring any cooperation on our part, nothing is easier than

to live Christianly. But where, then, would be the merit?

The fact is that God has decided otherwise. He has not, it is true, spared us His grace; but this is always on the express condition that we use it.

He Himself still acts personally in us, but by adapting, one may say, His activity to ours; by leaving to us, under the efficacious influx of His grace, the merit of initiative and liberty; by subjecting, consequently, the direct growth of the supernatural virtues to the law of human action.

It is in this sense that the theologians reasonably maintain that if grace transforms us, it does not deform us; that if it deifies us, it does not dehumanize us.

In making us Christians, God always respects our liberty as upright men. The supernatural virtues are from Him; they are given freely to us for our service, and from Him comes or not their increase. It is very good to count upon God's grace, but it is better to realize that God counts on us.

Before being a Christian, and in order to become one, it is necessary to live as an honorable man. Let us always well understand this formula. It does not mean that up to a certain age it is necessary to practise exclusively the natural virtues that make a man honorable, and then to busy ourselves only with the exercise of supernatural virtues proper to Christians. The reader is too intelligent to misunderstand us in this way.

There are not in us two distinct beings separated by a closed wall, man on one side and Christian on the other, as would seem to be indicated by the doctrine of parallelism of the virtues mentioned above. It is the same person who at the same time and in all circumstances, from the age of reason to the grave, must force himself to realize the human ideal and the Christian ideal, the one eminently containing the other.

But what should be noted here is the intimate, vital connection which exists between the development of the supernatural virtues

and the corresponding human and natural acts.

Experience shows us that charity, for example—and by it all the other Christian virtues—increases or diminishes in proportion to the intensity or the weakness of the human acts by which we exercise it. It does not follow that it is these human acts of charity that directly increase the virtue itself of charity, as if merely an acquired human virtue were concerned; but it does follow that God directly increases charity in us in proportion to the merit and the intensity of the human acts of charity which, thanks to it, we produce.

Further, it follows in a more general way that the development or diminution of the Christian virtues, notwithstanding the transcendence of their origin, is intimately bound up with their exercise; that is, with the greater or less intensity of the acts, at the same time human and divine, which emanate from them.

Finally, it follows that we cannot exercise these virtues without a knowledge of the case, or, in other words, without taking exact,

though not always complete, account of their object, and of the circumstances of their realization. For if the supernatural virtues are infused, their object is not.

Let us suppose now that a Christian who for thirty years has exercised Christian charity, and, through it, advanced in other virtues, happens one day to sin mortally.

It is of faith that at this moment he will lose at one stroke charity and all the infused virtues. Will any one claim that this Christian, when he recovers grace by means of forgiveness of his sin, will be, as regards the exercise of charity, in the same condition that he was thirty or even ten years before, exposed to the same danger of falling? Evidently not.

For repetition of the supernatural acts of charity that he has made all through his life, with increasing intensity, will not only merit, on God's part, an augmentation of grace, but will have created at the same time in his will a quasi-natural need of acting supernaturally.

The repetition of these superhuman acts has left behind them, in the faculties acting, a permanent human disposition that does not disappear with the infused virtues, but will serve as a natural foundation when God again infuses grace into the soul. Strengthened by this human acquisition, the will, regenerated by grace, will again naturally and easily employ its supernatural virtues. God Himself will continue to increase these virtues, but the facility of exercising them enables the soul to make always more intense acts which merit, on the part of God, their increase.

It is, then, in this sense, and in this sense only, that one can say that grace acts according to nature, and that the acquired or natural virtues facilitate the play of infused or supernatural virtues. The more these are exercised, the more they contribute to the acquisition of the others and benefit by such acquisition. Because it is clear that the "human residue" (if I may be allowed the expression) of the long exercised supernatural virtues facilitates their intensive development.

The most beautiful building, if it have not a solid foundation, is at the mercy of a gust of wind. The strongest oak, transplanted to too shallow soil, perishes. Similarly, the Christian virtues claim from us, in order to give them their full value, strong human substructures. On the one hand, they are wonderful plants, nourished by a divine sap; but, on the other, they remain exotic to us. If, then, we do not furnish them, in the conservatory of our soul, a soil rich in natural energy, a consistent humus, the least breath of passion that passes over them will beat them flat and uproot them.[3]

Because of the fire of concupiscence that smoulders in all of us, the virtue of chastity, more than any other virtue, is subject to this law of growth. Hence, before sowing the ideal seed, under the form of initiation, in the soul of a child, its educators are bound to prepare the soil, to strengthen and to enrich it. This is the object of the preparatory moral education of which we have spoken.

But one cannot put off indefinitely the time

of sowing, nor leave this to chance. And since, on one side, the supernatural virtue of purity, to have its effect, is conditioned, even in children, by exercise, and, on the other, this cannot take place by the repetition of acts except by a knowledge of the case, why do not educators profit—I do not say by the first occasion offering—but by the crisis of puberty to sow in the souls of children with art and discretion the seed of truth which will enable them to concentrate on this delicate point the combined efforts of nature and grace?

Besides, it is impossible that at this moment God should not come to the help of the children and of the educators. In the children this sane, progressive, sustained initiation, by a combined action of nature and grace, will always be less dangerous than any sort of initiation coming to them from it matters not where and under a vicious form, at a time when they least expect it, and when they will not find themselves prepared for right defence.

Nevertheless, the partisans of silence do not

yield. Possessed by the idea that the first initiation, even reduced to a minimum, is calculated to imperil the innocence of every child, whether raised in a Christian way or not, and persuaded that only with age does this first initiation (no matter whence it comes) lose its dangerous character, they will not listen to a virtue of chastity, natural or supernatural, which can only be acquired and developed in the light of knowledge, and they prefer to take refuge in the instinctive sense of modesty, whose instinctive character they would supplement by reflection.

III. The Sentiment of Modesty in Educating to Purity

FOERSTER has noted with nicety that "in our intellectualist century too many persons have lost the power of comprehending the powerful defensive instincts of the unconscious life, which find their expression in the sentiment of modesty."[4] And if he intends by this that one has not the right, under the pretext that

science cures everything, to attack this sentiment by gorging children with technical details relative to the exercise of chastity, he is perfectly correct.

Such details, exposed crudely and without measure to children, and even to some adults, whom one has not prepared by strengthening their will through an intensive moral education, are of a nature to wound modesty and make them lose their moral poise.

But let us remark that in the hypothesis we assume there is no question of a scientific initiation, and that, besides, the children for whom there is question of a first initiation have been raised in a Christian way and have become capable of self-mastery.

It is clear that, even after the crisis of puberty, and, in every case, before the moral education of the child is assured, the educators ought jealously to respect his sentiment of modesty. "It is precisely because modesty preserves the sexual field from the full knowledge which reflection throws," again remarks Foerster, "that it has for the educator and for

the hygienist such a great value that nothing will ever replace it."

The sentiment of modesty in a child is like the instinct of "wolf" in a lamb which has never before encountered such an animal, yet flees at its approach. The child divines that there is for him in the field of life's experiences a "reserved domain," and instinctively keeps on the outskirts of this domain, where he flees from a word, an image, or an expression which, though its exact sense escapes him, urges him on in spite of himself. This instinctive feeling of modesty, even those who write unrestrainedly and pose as the champions of "full light," hold in respect before some children.

To cultivate this sentiment among children, and as long as the crisis of puberty does not put any troubling question to their spirit, is a mark of wisdom. In Scripture there are some terrible words addressed to those who, without reason or through malice, expose themselves "to scandalize one of these little ones."

Nevertheless, no one among us can keep a child from passing from the shadows of instinct to the mature light of reflection. A day comes when, in virtue of the manifold influences of one's nature, certain formidable questions propose themselves to his spirit, if not in precise terms, at least in vague ones, and whose indefiniteness even accentuates the peril.

Is any one sure that at this moment the instinct of modesty is a sufficient weapon in his hand? Will it not be wiser to ally this instinct with reflection?

The feeling of modesty, indeed, is not, as some seem to think, exclusively the expression of the unconscious life. In other words, the consciousness of evil, or rather of moral danger, may ally itself perfectly with this sentiment in some delicate and well-reared souls.

It is necessary to have the cult of modesty, but not the superstition. Does one infallibly lose this sentiment in acquiring an exact, if not complete, notion of things about which it is concerned? Does modesty, whose very

name evokes the idea of whiteness, resemble the snow of the streets that melts at the first ray of the sun; or does it not recall rather the snow of the mountain-tops that the full sun cannot penetrate?

For my part, I think that a certain teaching of young men and young women upon questions that the crisis of puberty brings before their imagination or into their hearts with an extreme sharpness is perfectly compatible with a parallel education of modesty. I believe that there is a way of drawing the attention of children and of adolescents to certain physiological and psychological manifestations proper to their age and their sex, while at the same time cultivating their instinct of modesty. And it is not necessary for this to enter into useless technical details; a common-sense teaching, utilizing current words, and exactly adapted to the weak intellectual demands of children in these matters, is perfectly sufficient.

For example, in the mouth of a truly Christian mother, careful of the spiritual interests

of her son or daughter, such teaching is clothed with modesty without losing anything of its relative and intended precision. There will be in the attitude of the mother at this solemn hour a sentiment of responsibility and an instinctive appreciation of the needs of her child that will dictate to her the necessary words, and an accent of goodness that will emphasize the moral import. The child will remain a long time impressed, and, the remembrance of the gravity of his mother being associated in his mind with the things revealed, his modesty will not suffer at all, but rather be strengthened.

Let me repeat that everything depends upon the way. But I cannot bring myself to think that this manner is not within the reach of almost all mothers who from the first day have presided over the physical and moral development of their children; who have followed closely the unfolding of all their soul-needs; who, in place of satisfying all the caprices of their children, have accustomed them to conquer themselves; who, at each new diffi-

culty, have helped them to victory by appealing to all the resources of religion, of their heart, by cultivating their piety, by urging them to receive the Sacraments—in short, by organizing this pedagogy of chastity which prepares them in a close way for the passage from childhood to adolescence, from negative to positive innocence.

That, in fact, too many parents do not raise their children in this way, and are more occupied in "sissifying" than in "virilizing" them; that in many of our colleges and institutions religious education is not yet integral, and that sentiment plays a bigger part than intellect and will: this is a remark of public notoriety and eminently regrettable. But this assertion of fact does not touch upon the question of principle.

Doubtless it is necessary to conclude from it that parents and superiors are bound in conscience to change their method of education, or rather to perfect it, in early habituating their children to struggle against their tendencies, their caprices, and their ease; to place

their senses under the dominion of their will; voluntarily to utilize their passions in place of abandoning themselves to the force of their inertia, and to do this with all the resources of grace and for the love of Christ, centre and model of all Christian life.

But one has not the right to conclude that "the true principle in the matter of educating to purity, if one must give one, is that of silence and not of initiation"; nor to pretend, in generalizing this principle, that "ignorance and piety are the two guardians of virtue."

Not only is this untenable theoretically, but nothing is more dangerous practically.

Of two things, one must, indeed, be true: either the child whose education in purity is at stake has not been raised in a Christian manner—that is, has not received the preparatory moral education of the will that efficiently arms it against the real or imaginary danger of certain anticipated revelations (in this case, if there is yet time, his will ought to be strengthened by a pedagogy of chastity be-

fore enlightening his intellect on the special subject of this virtue); or the child, on the contrary, has received this preparatory education, and then it is necessary to choose between a measured and progressive initiation adapted by his educators to his moral and intellectual needs of the moment, or a chance initiation, which, brutal and unexpected, may destroy in a moment the results of many years of effort.

Between these two initiations, has one a right to hesitate? This right, we have seen, is hardly maintainable in principle. It is not maintainable in fact when the social circumstances accompanying the evolution of a child multiply at pleasure around him the sources of vicious revelations and the chances of an explosion in his senses. Now, who would dare to assert that this is not the case to-day for the greater part of the children in all classes of society?

Never were the chances for an unforeseen and vicious initiation, in what concerns the

purity of children, greater than to-day. Never, consequently, was the necessity of a voluntary and sane initiation on the part of their educators imposed with greater weight.

[1] Taken altogether, this theory fails in every case to conform to the doctrine of St. Thomas. For St. Thomas, it is God who directly increases grace in us, but on two conditions: on condition of the reception of the Sacraments, and on condition of the exercise of our infused graces under the movement of charity, in which all our virtues are combined. A little baptized child who receives the Eucharist without well understanding what it is doing receives an increase of grace because of the efficacy of the Sacraments, which always work of themselves when no positive obstacle is placed in their way. But ordinarily, according to St. Thomas, God proportions the graces to the merit and intensity of our supernatural acts. Doubtless these acts can contribute to the increase of charity only as they are meritorious—that is to say, in so far as they proceed from charity; but to increase charity it is not sufficient that they be meritorious; charity is not augmented by God except in proportion to the intensity of the meritorious acts. The reason is that virtues, even supernatural ones, are modifications of our powers, and cannot ordinarily increase except according to the manner of the powers that they

use; that is to say, by the repetition of acts proportioned in intensity. It is, indeed, hard to understand how a less intense act of charity, were it meritorious, contributes to the increase of charity. It is contrary to nature; and if one admits, ordinarily, that grace conforms to nature, one comprehends all the danger there would be in maintaining that it is not by exercise that the supernatural virtues increase.

I am not ignorant that Suarez, who admits that supernatural virtues increase through exercise, pretends that it matters not what act of charity, even though of the least intensity, provided only it be meritorious, helps to increase grace. But to dare to maintain that his thought conforms with that of St. Thomas, it is necessary to contend that on this point St. Thomas is not clear. Suarez is alone in such an opinion, or almost so. Here are the passages in St. Thomas which those interested in these questions may profitably consult: II, ii, 2; XXIV, a. 6; I, ii, 2; CXIV, a. 8 ad 3; II Sent., dist. XXVII, q. I, a. V ad 3; I Sent., dist. XVII, q. II, a. 3.

[2] Here I except the case where the grace increases by means of Sacraments received; but the sacramental graces themselves are ordinarily for action—that is, they have for their end to make us posit more intense meritorious actions, which will contribute to the increase of charity, thanks to their merit and intensity.

[3] We shall have occasion to return to this point more at length, and to illustrate this doctrine by some ex-

amples, when we indicate the practical way in which we can facilitate the exercise of supernatural virtues by the help of the corresponding natural virtues. (Cf. Chapter V.)

[4] *Op. cit.*, pp. 61 *et seq.*

CHAPTER IV

IGNORANCE OF TO-DAY AND INNOCENCE OF TO-MORROW

FROM our preceding analyses two conclusions have already appeared with a certain clearness. Let us recall them briefly.

The first regards the employment of the scientific method pure and simple in the matter of chastity. Used alone, without preparatory or parallel education of the will, this method cannot help being dangerous, whether it deal with individual education in purity, or, *a fortiori,* with collective education.

Further, even under the hypothesis of a preparatory or parallel moral education, the scientific method remains inapplicable and, even were this not so, it would he useless.

It is inapplicable because neither can all the natural educators use it, nor are the ma-

jority of children capable of profiting by it.

And it is useless if one will carefully observe that training in purity is more an art than a science, being, on the one hand, opposed to collective teaching, and, on the other, essentially dependent, from an individual point of view, upon an assemblage of factors where science has nothing to see and where common sense and a certain number of moral qualities suffice.

But, in default of a dangerous, inapplicable, and useless scientific method, does it follow that we must have recourse to the method of silence, and put off as long as possible, for all children, without consideration of age, sex, or environment, the time of initiation?

In theory the method of silence seems preferable to the scientific method. There is at least this appreciable advantage, that it eliminates all collective initiation. But, from the individual point of view, it puts the difficulty off without solving it. Because, willy-nilly, a day comes when children must be initiated, whether children have been prepared morally,

by an appropriate education, voluntarily to resist the dangers inherent in every initiation, or whether they have not. If they have not, their innocence will not profit by a prolonged ignorance. If they have been prepared, it is in this moral preparation, and not in their ignorance, that their innocence will find a support.

Besides, is it not evident that the very troubling and delicate question of educating to purity concerns the will more than the intellect of children, and that having asked if it be better to tell all or to tell nothing, it is necessary to prepare them morally for what, according to the circumstances and their individual need of knowledge, one thinks himself obliged to reveal to them on this question?

Thus put, the problem does not seem insoluble. For it is stated, in the first place, in individual, not collective terms. Besides, this individual moral preparation which allows children, if the case arise, to guard against the dangers of a measured and pro-

gressive initiation is merely a matter of time and degree. Begun at the cradle with all the resources of nature and of grace, by conscientious and watchful parents and superiors, it enables the children themselves, during the crisis of puberty and afterwards, to hold their own against the dangers which may come from a relatively forced initiation. By relative I mean relative to each child, to his need of knowing the difficulties of his temperament, and the different circumstances in which he is placed.

Doubtless it remains true that all initiation in these matters implies some risk. But it is necessary to know if a prejudiced silence, under all circumstances, does not mean more danger than a sane initiation, adapted to each particular case, under the condition of previous morality that we have assumed.

For our part, we believe that, on principle, the will of the child being since its birth prepared by an intense moral and religious training, this relative and determined initiation will always be preferable to an absolute

silence, which does not guarantee against all chance of vicious initiation.

In practice, in the actual circumstances of life, we think that no serious educator, taking account of his responsibility, will hesitate a moment between the hypothetical danger of a sane initiation, made by those who love the children and have care of them, and the quasi-certainty of a vicious initiation, made by any chance acquaintance without regard for the souls of the children.

I. Social Facts and Innocence

MANY psychologists have asked why, in recent times, certain educators, justly busied with the question of educating to purity, have so loudly praised the method of silence.

There are many reasons, of which the most weighty and important, it seems to me, are drawn from the manifest exaggerations of the scientific method. But still among these latter it is necessary to distinguish between secular and religious educators. The former have

an absolute faith in the efficiency of the scientific method; the latter have only a relative faith.

Secular educators believe that a scientific training may advantageously supplant a moral education, and that there is no danger in giving it a collective character, even for the youngest and without distinction of sex. In proof of this they appeal to a purely academic experience.

Religious educators, better informed and more experienced, are supported by the whole tradition of the Church in emphasizing the education of the will as contrasted with that of the intellect. Nevertheless, they believe that in what concerns chastity a scientific education ought to supplement a moral training, and not the least among them are not opposed to collective teaching. And this in part explains the violent reaction working among the advocates of silence.

These latter, one must admit, have seen only too well the dangers of a collective scientific initiation even among children raised in a

Christian way. They are convinced, with reason, that the psychology of groups does not obey the same laws as the individual psychology, and that it will always be dangerous to handle certain "explosives" in public. For experience has amply proved that serious children and young people do not exercise an influence in direct proportion to their numbers, if indeed it does not diminish in the same ratio. The fear of appearing what they are will keep most (excepting the best) young folks from showing themselves to be what they should; and educators must always take account of this strange but undeniable attitude.

Besides, it has not been demonstrated that an individual scientific education should be a necessary complement of a vigorous moral education, partly because of its technical aspect and its inability to influence the will of the children at the same time that it opens the gate of knowledge, and partly because of the notorious incapacity of the majority of educators to give this technical teaching, and of the majority of children to receive it intelligently.

But it is not necessary, in rejecting the scientific method, to go to extremes and to oppose it with a method of silence. Between science and ignorance there is plenty of room, we have seen, for an intermediary individual initiation which is more an art than a science.

To each particular educator, according to the circumstances, belongs the delicate task of knowing what ought or ought not to be said to any child confided to him, when it should be said, and how. Nature and grace offer an infinity of resources in the intellectual and moral order, and he is strictly bound to use them wisely. We shall shortly try roughly to trace the programme of such an education, where common sense and experience are called upon to play the principal rôles.

It is in the use of this method of individual initiation, adapted to the circumstances of age, sex, temperament, and environment, that it is necessary to look for the tradition of the Church, and not in the employment of a method of crude enlightenment or of absolute ignorance.

"The Church in the first ages of the Christian era," writes one of the most ardent advocates of the method of silence, "spoke to the faithful a language that would not be tolerated to-day. But what does this prove? That the preachers adapted themselves to the understanding of their hearers. At that time they were still in the midst of paganism; certain gross and repugnant terms were in current use; they shocked no one; there is nothing surprising in the Fathers and Doctors employing this terminology. But can any one tell us that the bishops would to-day permit such language in the pulpit, or in catechetical instruction, or in classes presided over by a priest or religious? . . . How, then, can educators in purity claim the Church as favorable to their system of telling everything? In the seminaries there is for priests a course which gives the necessary teaching on this subject. But the conduct of the Church regarding this course, far from proving that she favors the system of telling everything, shows clearly that she holds it in aversion."

In my turn, I ask, What does this prove? Evidently this proves against the secular advocates of the scientific method pure and simple, that they greatly deceive themselves in putting all their hope in science as a safeguard for the purity of children, as if the Church's twenty centuries of experience did not demonstrate to the most obstinate that science is powerless and fatal where the will has not been armed morally against the crudity of its revelations.

This proves, too, against the religious partisans of a collective or individual education in purity by means of the scientific method, that this method, far from being the necessary complement of a strong religious and moral education, is rather a dangerous instrument in collective, and at least useless in individual, education.

But it proves absolutely nothing against the use of a method of initiation in which common sense replaces science, and which, measured and progressive, takes special account of the needs of each particular child, without any

intention of telling everything, but with the sole care of saying what is necessary and in the proper way, giving to the training of the will the right of way over education of the intellect, so as exactly to proportion the necessary revelations to the moral power of resistance in the individual.

For there is no question here of telling everything, as the partisans of silence imagine; nor of telling it from the pulpit, or in the catechism class, or at school. The method of relative initiation that we advocate is strictly individual, and its employment varies from one case to another in the intimate family circle and in the confessional.

Will any one say that this method does not accord with the traditions of the Church? Every one must grant that in the first centuries of Christianity the Fathers and Doctors were not watched so closely in these matters. In the Middle Ages preachers were not blamed for calling things in the pulpit by their names. Later on, certain saints, as St. Bernardine of Siena and St. Vincent Ferrer, did

not beat about the bush in denouncing to their hearers the grossness of their lives.

The Church to-day, some one says, would not tolerate such language, and this is true; but such freedom is not in question. Besides, no matter what any one says, this at least proves that the Church, throughout the long course of her existence, has adapted her teaching to the necessities of the moment.

But if the language of educators has been ennobled, will any one dare to maintain that the morals of to-day have been improved? Are we not, on the contrary, witnessing a veritable recrudescence of paganism? And if, at the different periods of demoralization among Christians, the Church has adapted her language to the needs of the faithful, will she not to-day, in the family or in the confessional, for the sole purpose of enabling children of themselves to react against the licentious morals they are every moment forced to witness, allow educators to say to each one of these children, alone and according to their personal needs, in a language noble but pre-

cise, what she once allowed to be cried aloud from the pulpit, in a crude, gross style, to crowds of the faithful?

For it cannot be denied that from day to day children of all classes of society and of every age are now exposed to seeing or hearing things which endanger their purity. In this regard poor and rich alike are in the same boat.

For the poor there is the school, whether mixed or not, where the companionship of bad children is always to be feared; after school, the precocious life of domestic service in the town or village or city; then the workshop; then the tavern.

For the rich there are almost the same dangers at the college or boarding-school; or, at the university, in the conversation, the journals, the reviews; then, in the world, the entertainments where young men and women are left to themselves without the surveillance of parents; dances, galleries, summer and winter resorts, in the mountains, at the sea-shore; theatres, concerts, and shows of all sorts.

For all there is the street, with its indecent posters, its salacious exhibitions, its pornographic post-cards, its suggestive advertisements, and its display of so-called artistic nudities.

I grant that some children and youths, especially if they be well brought up and guarded, may sometimes pass through this poisoned atmosphere, preserving their innocence in virtue of their ignorance. But they will always be the exception. Whereas, here more than elsewhere it is not the exception, but the rule that counts. And who would dare to maintain as a general rule that from twelve to eighteen years one can, without serious and proximate danger of intoxication, breathe a fetid air, where the poison of impurity enters one, so to say, through every pore?

Moreover, the strictest partisans of the method of silence in theory are obliged in practice to relax some of their rigor and make some concessions. They grant that, being given the deplorable circumstances in which

we live regarding social morals, it is allowed to the natural educators of the child, if they believe it is not prudent further to prolong his ignorance on questions relating to chastity, to give him some knowledge, but not a definite knowledge. They wish this knowledge to be "indefinite," and they pretend to make this concession only on such a condition.

Let us see what we should think of this attitude.

II. Indefinite Knowledge and Innocence

SPEAKING of the dangers of the scientific method in these delicate matters, one of the most ardent and most intelligent defenders of the method of silence has made this remark: "In the first place, the child wishes to know. And in this field his natural curiosity will be sharpened by an instinct whose tendency he does not understand. It is intended that the initiation should be slow and progressive. But you are not able to initiate as you plan. It is he who manages his investigation. Where

will you stop your question, and on what pretext?"

If there is question of an exclusively scientific education in purity, where science replaces all moral education, this remark is profoundly true. For, in the name even of the science that one imposes on him, he has the right to know all; and I do not know what pretext one can draw from science itself to place any bounds to his natural curiosity.

But in a system of training to purity, where the education addresses itself more to the will of the child than to his intellect, it seems to me that the educator has a hundred motives of the natural and supernatural order to forbid the child to see further than the scientific explanations given to him, and that the educator reserves to himself to give when and how he pleases. There are innumerable things that well brought up children would do if they merely followed their instincts, and which they give up voluntarily out of obedience and in the name of God. Will the natural need of knowing slip the bridle of

their will in this regard, when they know clearly that God, the Church, their parents and superiors wish them momentarily to hold a tight rein?

And if this be true of a scientific initiation based on moral education, which we have seen is inapplicable and useless, much more ought this to be true about a common-sense, measured and progressive, strictly individual initiation, when, by reason of the moral and religious authority that they exercise over their will, the natural educators of the child have the power of satisfying and restraining his natural curiosity, according to the needs of the moment, of which they remain the judges.

Moreover, the adversaries of all initiation admit that, despite the need of knowing which is natural to a child, one can impose upon him, during long years, an absolute ignorance. Will it, then, be more difficult to impose upon him, appealing firmly to divine motives, and giving him a multitude of natural and supernatural means, a relative ignorance, otherwise

called a slow, progressive, common-sense initiation?

Let us recall, also, that the children to be initiated have been prepared long since, by an intensive and profoundly Christian culture of their will, to react against the supposed danger of a sane initiation adapted to the temperament and to the mentality of each.

Besides, let us recall that this strictly individual initiation should not ordinarily begin before the crisis of puberty, and that during this crisis it is particularly the child's personal need of knowing that will furnish to the parents the measure and tone of the initiation in question.

Finally, let us note that we live at a time of such general moral deterioration that the symptoms, by their quality and number, have delivered us up to a contempt of all modesty, and have placed that of children in special danger at the time precisely when, under the influence of profound physiological transformations, their little being is in a ferment and fever of knowing.

This being so, where is the mother, conscious of her responsibility, of so little intelligence and ability that she cannot perceive in the looks, the attitude, on the lips of her child, these delicate and disturbing questions, and cannot find in her heart and soul the reply to give them, and the desired authority to forbid to the child to seek beyond her answer?

Where is the mother who, having seen, during a dozen or more years, her son or daughter habituated to obey her, to act according to conscience, to master their growing senses, to place the will of God in the first rank as rule of all their conduct, to pray and to receive the Sacraments with this intention, will not feel the necessary authority to tell them, at the critical moment of a needed revelation, looking deep down into their eyes: "My child, do not worry. This is the point. I am not telling you everything, because you are not of an age to understand, but what you can understand I do tell you. You must not inquire further. Some day you will know the

whole truth; but the little that you do know, since it is all true, ought to be enough. Look upon the desire to know more as a temptation. Later we shall take up this talk again. But now pray to God, obey your mother, keep to yourself what I have told you, and think no more about it."

Such language from a mother whose goodness has gained the confidence of the child, and whose authority has his respect, will certainly be satisfactory. But let every one note that it will be so because of its very clearness, and not because of its confusion. For the child tries less to know everything than to understand the little that one has told him, and that he requires one should tell him. Ordinarily he does not go beyond the questions that he asks, but this is on condition that one has not the air of evading him, of answering beside the mark, or in an unintelligible fashion.

If, then, by "confused" knowledge certain educators, in the present question, mean an incomplete knowledge, nothing is better.

But the term is incorrect, for an incomplete knowledge is not necessarily confused. We do not know the whole of anything, but what we do know is not therefore confused.

On the contrary, if by confused knowledge these educators mean an ambiguous, vague, uncertain knowledge, I believe that the remedy that they propose is more dangerous than ignorance. At least, as long as a child doubts nothing, he does not seek to know. But as soon as his soul awakes, if he perceives, from the intended vagueness of your language, that you are not answering his questions, or if he only suspects that you are deceiving him by answering beside the mark, he will himself seek elsewhere, in secret, the answer, and he will withdraw the confidence he had in you.

We are, then, brought to this dilemma: whether indefinitely to prolong the ignorance of children after the crisis of puberty (but we have seen that this is morally impossible, especially at present) or to profit by this crisis to give with authority and clearness a com-

mon-sense initiation proportioned to their limited and progressive needs of knowing.

I shall not, in closing, invoke my personal experience of youths, although it is entirely in favor of this last position. But I could invoke the witness of many Christian mothers, who have never had to repent of having so acted.

By contrast one sees every day, on the morrow of their marriage, for example, "well brought up" young women, whose innocence has been jealously guarded in favor of ignorance, fall victims to the first initiation, and in an instant and forever lose their innocence.

How many others are bound in marriage knowing nothing, and who, of their own will, had they known, would never have wished to marry, and would have made to God, in religion or in the world, an offering of their virginity!

It seems to me that these simple considerations are of a nature to make the reader reflect, and that they stand in no need of comment. I do not insist further.

CHAPTER V

A TENTATIVE PROGRAMME OF EDUCATING TO PURITY ACCORDING TO THE COMMON-SENSE METHOD

NEITHER crude illumination nor absolute ignorance—that is our motto; we believe that we have justified it sufficiently.

Not crude illumination; that is, not scientific education, either individual or collective. By itself, science not only does not beget morality, but will, by revealing their object, awaken in those abstracting from the control of an educated will the instincts of a dormant sensuality.

Supported by a strong moral and religious education, science, under the technical aspect that characterizes scientific teaching, will remain eminently dangerous as a method of collective education because of the peculiar

psychology characterizing all groups of young people; besides, I do not believe it is applicable by the majority of parents, or useful to the majority of children, even if considered as an instrument of individual education.

But neither should we have absolute ignorance. Neither in theory nor in practice is the method of silence a method of education successfully to tide over the crisis of puberty, where the natural need of knowing may awaken from one moment to another.

Between the scientific method and the method of silence, however, there is a place for a method of strictly individual initiation, which supposes as a necessary condition a maximum of moral and religious education of the will, and which is more an art than a science.

In theory this method of initiation, in which only the needs of the particular child govern the conduct and usage of the educators, is far preferable to the method of silence. In the first place, the moral foundation which it demands as a preliminary guarantees the sen-

sibility of the child against the supposed danger of a sane initiation; besides, it allows the child, by the progressive repetition of acts of chastity performed with a knowledge of the case, to acquire the habit of chastity under the influence and the guarantee of the corresponding infused virtue, and makes him naturally chaste, since habit is, beyond doubt, a second nature.

In practice it protects the child against the certain dangers of a vicious initiation, whose sources, in this period of social demoralization, have been multiplied at will.

It now remains for us to outline the programme of educating to purity which the natural educators of the child ought to follow. This programme has two aspects, one negative and the other positive.

Negatively, the educators ought to use all the forces they can to lessen, if not to suppress entirely, the innumerable sources of moral corruption that are the disgrace of our age.

Positively, they should adapt the initiation to the multiple needs of the children under

their care, taking strict account of their age, sex, individual temperament, and the different surroundings where they have attained to virility or full moral maturity.

I. Negative Education in Purity and the Social Sources of Corruption

I DO not intend to study in detail each of the active sources of demoralization which seem to have sprung spontaneously from the depths of modern society, nor even to enumerate them all. It will suffice to indicate the principal ones in order to throw into relief the remedy which all of good will, who wish to dam as soon as possible these currents of immorality, should use.

And first as to pornography.

The whole world knows with what insolence and facility pornography is propagated to-day by the street, pictures, newspapers, novels, cabarets, moving pictures, theatres. M Bérenger, speaking before the last annual reunion of the Société d'Économie Sociale,[1]

thus sums up the dangers of the street: "There is the kiosk, where the obscenity of the day is exposed; the shops, and even the big stores, where are found books with degrading covers and suggestive titles to catch the eye. There is the second-hand bookseller, whose shop is open to every one, and who, side by side with old books which are all he has a right to sell, places modern productions whose illustrations or titles proclaim their frank obscenity; there is the popular song shouted in the street with orchestral accompaniment, and the refrain repeated in chorus by the crowd. . . . There is the billboard, for which, it must be admitted, there is something to be said, but which from time to time offers open provocation to the passionate glances of the youthful. There is the distribution of advertisements or shameful pictures; there is the spectacle of the circus, where the passer-by, without entering the booth, gathers something of the audacious clap-trap attracting the crowd. There is the poster of the show that no one has dared to

present elsewhere, or, again, what is perhaps worse and more dangerous, saying, 'Children prohibited.'

"And finally, beyond all, as the most deadly teaching of the street, there is prostitution to-day left mistress of the sidewalk, almost everywhere, almost at all hours, enjoying in certain quarters and at certain times the fullest liberty.

"This is the sight that the street presents to-day. How do you expect children (I mean that great number who live on the street, and only there, from morning till night) to pass unharmed through so many elements soliciting their curiosity, at an age when they do not yet know, and when they (especially those who are forbidden) wish to know all?"

Doubtless, as M. Bérenger himself remarks, thanks to the watchfulness of those who accompany them, many children of the middle and upper classes escape, at least in part, the contamination of the streets. But the children of the people, those whose working parents

cannot keep watch, and who pass their days in the street, or merely a part of their day in going to or from school—how can they escape? They roam around, seeking everything that attracts their attention or strikes their fancy; and then from the kiosk, where is exposed the foul picture of an illustrated paper, they pass on to the book-shop, to the second-hand dealer, to the window of the artificial limb-maker, the hair-dresser, the woman's tailor; then to the circus and all that follows.

This is the evil. But what is the remedy?

The best thing would evidently be to collect these children of the people, during their hours of complete liberty, in the day-nurseries, circles, and homes, and to undertake their moral education. We shall return to this point. But, in the meantime, there is another remedy that presents itself, and that is to improve the street. What the police can do to safeguard material property in the streets of Paris by prohibiting under fine the throwing of hand-bills, advertisements, and

other similar papers, will not the State attempt in order to protect moral property?

The State long ago attempted this by laws concerning these matters: the law of 1881 on the liberty of the press; the law of 1881 against publications exposed or distributed on public conveyances and at the doors of theatres; the law of the 7th of June, 1908, wherein everything we have just described is expressly forbidden and penalized.

For the most part the laws would be sufficient if they were enforced—but they are not enforced. M. Bérenger, in the conference that I have just indicated, has furnished upon this point of the non-enforcement of the laws in Paris and in the provinces the most authoritative and distressing evidence. He has been able to prove "that in the measure that the signs of depravity and the number of offences increase, the repression diminishes."

This inertia of the authorities is found in every part of the administration. If you witness some disgraceful thing in the street and call a policeman, he excuses himself under the

pretext "that he has no orders." Once some circular letters recommended vigilance to the magistrates; but for ten years no further instruction has been sent out. There is the same inaction at the prefecture of police. No measure has been taken regarding this abuse in theatres. It is known that scandals abound, and yet nothing is done.

In view of this cowardice on the part of the public authorities, what can be done? M. Bérenger has suggested certain remedies. The first is to exact a serious application of our laws. All should concentrate their efforts on this point.

Afterwards he would work to obtain for the societies entrusted with the high mission of securing a strict enforcement of the law the right to carry cases directly to the tribunals.

But, while seeing that the laws are better applied and that the right of direct intervention be given certain societies, there are other ways of reacting upon the public and upon individuals.

Collective action is the great weapon of our time; let us use it. Many societies already exist. It only remains to form some new ones and to have them all meet, speak, act, and so create a public opinion that can no longer be resisted by the authorities. An international convention has already undertaken the study of defence against the rising tide of debauchery: so far six nations have joined it. In the latest diocesan congress of Paris M. de Launay declared that the Ligue contre la Licence des Rues et contre la Pornographie (10 rue Pasquier) helps all who are willing to work against this evil, and he invited the parochial committees to enter the field.

In addition he urges that every one join the fight. The means of enforcing decency are not wanting. An individual remonstrance to the seller of the obscenity, a threat of buying nothing more from him, a personal complaint to the magistrate, is often given greater attention than the official denunciation of a group. One can do much by these simple

means to purify the street; let each one use them according to his power.

As to demoralizing literature, every one knows the circulation it has in our times and the injurious influence that it exercises on youth. If juvenile crime has increased in alarming proportions, it is not rash to assert that this literature is largely responsible. Among the effects of two children who murdered a whole family were found immoral writings and obscene songs. The motive for the greater part of the robberies committed by children is the desire, provoked and superexcited by unhealthy reading, to initiate themselves into the worst pleasures of men.

Some deadly theories, such as that of "art for art's sake," the inalienable rights of love, irresponsibility in crimes, noisily exploited before the public and circulated by all sorts of literary and oratorical means, have falsified the judgment of this generation.

"From this doctrine of success," writes M. Charles Brun, "that one can correctly call 'the immorality of literature,' we pass directly to

the development of individualism, which is not simply a literary evil. . . . Contemporary literature, because it justifies passion, because it glorifies success, tends to I know not what wild apotheosis of the individual. It proclaims the right of each one to remake and to live his own life, the right to happiness. And this mirage has deceived our youth, greedy for pleasure, and who do not know by what concessions and what wise restraint is attained human beatitude.

"It has struck the hardest blows at the family: it has advertised divorce, excused seduction, attended on free love, lighted incense in honor of the illegitimate child. It has placed the father and mother in humiliating positions in the presence of their children." [2]

Assuredly a reaction against this demoralizing literature has already set in among honorable authors, Christian and non-Christian. MM. Bourget, Barrès, Bazin, Bordeaux, to mention only the chief, have set themselves resolutely to the task of reform, and exercise over young people an influence that daily in-

creases. But the public ought to help them in their work of restoring literature and morals.

Why can we not have in France what has been successfully tried in Germany against immoral literature? In that country the law, by certain dispositions of the penal code (Art. 184 ff.) and of the commercial law (Gewerbeordnung, Art. 42a and 56), is enforced; the government, the administration, the municipalities, and finally private initiative, act independently, and very often unite to attack and reduce the evil.

Here, for example, is the well thought out doctrinal programme by which our neighbors on the east have applied themselves to methodize their efforts. It comprises two parts: one positive, of which we shall speak again, and one negative. The following are recommended as negative means of bridling demoralizing literature:

"(*a*) The measures that the governmental, municipal, educational, and police authorities can take (to impose legal proscriptions and apply more strictly existing proscriptions).

"(*b*) Prohibition of the sale of certain publications on the highways.

"(*c*) Pressure exercised upon the publishers and the small dealers, with co-operation of the Commissioners of Publication.

"(*d*) Surveillance of show-windows and shops.

"(*e*) Listing the firms selling immoral literature.

"(*f*) Putting parents and children on their guard, through the schools and associations, against demoralizing literature."

We may add the boycotting of books and of theatres where such literature is shamelessly exposed. An attempt of this kind has been recently made in an American city and has been perfectly successful. Some mothers threatened to avoid a theatre for a whole season if a certain doubtful piece were not withdrawn; the director was compelled to defer to the wishes and threats of the public.

But even in the best families a reaction is in order, for the sake of the children, against the introduction and display of works univer-

sally unhealthy. Thanks to an unpardonable unconsciousness, which can only be partly explained by the influence of the surrounding atmosphere, even some Catholic educators are deserving of grave reproach. I know many whose libraries, always open and ready to the hand of children, contain in novels or illustrated books the worst productions of modern times. Others, in greater numbers, expose upon their drawing-room tables, alongside of collections of gross post-cards, the *Illustration Théâtrale,* which contains the "popular pieces"—that is, those in which, on each page, the morality of the home is held up to the greatest possible ridicule.

Still others—especially mothers—who wish the innocence of their daughters to be above suspicion, and who would regard it as a mistake personally to undertake in their regard a necessary initiation demanded by the circumstances, consider it their duty to take them to shows that would make a sailor blush, without appearing to suspect that they can have any consequences. They foolishly count upon

the children's supposed ignorance to safeguard their hypothetical innocence.

Such conduct betokens an inconsistency or a cowardice beyond comment. I do not charge you parents, positively, with the education of your children, if you have not the courage; but at least be brave enough not to endanger their virtue by the introduction into your homes of immoral books and indecent pictures, which, in spite of your vigilance, may fall under their eyes. Always lock your libraries and forbid your children to enter your salons; do not take them to suggestive theatres. In addition, watch your conversation before them, and do not give them a taste for certain toilettes which make them appear as if they were undressed.

There remains something to be said about contamination while at work. Whatever the age—twelve or thirteen as in France, or fourteen as in Belgium—of admitting young workers and apprentices, one cannot deny that it is at a critical period, when the passions are

stirring and experience fails. Would that all were even that old!

"But in the factory," as M. Joseph Legrand observes very justly, "they will find persons of fourteen, fifteen, eighteen years, and they will work side by side with them. If it is a school or institution in which the divisions are mixed, the barriers between the courses of the minims, the younger, and the oldest have been broken down! Imagine what in such circumstances would be the state of soul of the foreman of division or the prefect of studies!

"And especially in the factory is the situation complicated and aggravated by the fact that the foremen have not the zeal or the experience of the prefects that we knew at school; it is further complicated and aggravated by the fact that the boys and girls, if they are not in the same room, have a thousand opportunities to meet on the stairs, at the entrance, or at the exit of the works." [3]

There is every evidence to prove that here there is danger of moral contamination. One

cannot even dream of suppressing it, but only of lessening its effects. And for this there exist two classes of means: positive (of which we shall speak later), consisting of moral education at home, church, or school, before entrance into the factory; and negative, which we shall discuss now.

In his report upon the employers' work in preserving youthful morality, presented at the annual meeting of the Société d'Économie Sociale, May 29, 1911, M. Legrand has enumerated the chief means.[4]

After having shown that at the beginning of the development of big business the employers—even Christian ones—did not sufficiently consider this principal problem, he recalls the splendid social reform movement that has taken place since 1870. This is the period when M. le Comte de Mun and M. le Marquis de la Tour du Pin founded the Catholic workingmen's circles; when congresses were held that emphasized the moral and social duties of employers towards their work-people; when M. Harmel in his famous factory of

Val-du-Bois, M. Féron-Vrau at Lille, M. Dutilleul at Armentières, M. Bayart at Roubaix, M. Dupres-Lepers at Tourcoing, with a crowd of prominent and pious priests, busied themselves with putting in practice the resolutions of the congresses.

Such a conscientious employer is first occupied with separating the sexes; then he looks more to the recruiting of the force; forewomen are added, who, particularly well chosen, exercise a beneficial influence upon their subordinates. Then he comes gradually to group certain women in pious confraternities; to gather some men into Christian circles; to have retreats given to them, from which they come out determined to work for the conversion of their comrades.

Such is a rough outline as regards the adults. But it is also an indirect way of attending to the children by purifying the moral atmosphere where they are obliged to work. The law of 1892 came to the help of well-intentioned individuals by abolishing the hateful abuse of night work for women and

children; by forbidding labor dangerous to morality; by asking employers to watch over the maintenance of good morals and public decency; by obliging them to keep a register always at hand which an inspector can consult without notice.

The decree of November 20, 1904, was also the occasion of a very happy reform by forbidding workingmen to eat their lunches in the rooms given over to labor, and by suggesting to certain zealous employers the idea of special lunch-rooms where the young men and women, each on their own side, may gather at noon under the direction of some woman equal to this delicate task.

Meanwhile, no matter how numerous and efficacious may be these negative means of preserving morality on the street, in the family, or in the workshop, it is clear that by themselves they will be insufficient. All the laws and regulations in the world will never exhaust all the sources of social corruption. Thus positive education in purity, whether individual or collective, appears to be the

best pledge of the preservation of morality, especially if it is accompanied, at the moment determined upon, by all the legal and social additions of which we shall speak.

II. Positive Education in Purity: Individual Method

THIS programme comprises two periods, one concerning the education of childhood, and the other, that of adolescence.

The period devoted to childhood is itself divided into two very distinct phases: the first extends from the cradle to the crisis of puberty; the second takes in the whole of this crisis and the critical passage from childhood to youth, from negative to positive innocence.

(1) *Childhood.*—We have established that during the first phase of childhood, with rare exceptions, the education in purity ought to be indirect, and that the object is not to enlighten the child's mind upon this particular point, but to form his will. There will then

be no scientific initiation pure and simple. Until about ten or twelve, children do not generally show any need of knowing things concerning the sex problem, and to initiate them scientifically into such things, whether collectively or individually, without a preparation of their will, would be deliberately to expose them to the very dangers against which one pretends to guard them.

There should be no initiation of any sort upon the precise point of chastity, even on the supposition of a previous moral education. Because, for one thing, no such question ordinarily presents itself to the mind of children before the crisis of puberty; and besides, their will has not had the time to strengthen itself sufficiently to withstand the dangers that may come from any initiation, even though mild and healthy. Do we not know by faith, indeed, that all children, without exception, are born in an abnormal condition; that the consequences of original sin weigh upon each of them; that, in face of the inherited fire of concupiscence, their will, detached from God,

its living principle, is unstable and consequently incapable of mastering the instincts of sensuality that a precocious initiation would certainly arouse?

Undoubtedly the grace received in Baptism establishes in its way the moral equilibrium destroyed by the Fall. But if grace perfects nature, it does not make up for its activity. The infused and supernatural virtue of chastity, with all the others that the child receives in Baptism, in order to give its share of help, needs to be used intelligently by the supernaturalized will; to be expressed by acts at the same time natural and supernatural, which develop in the sensitive faculties an acquired virtue of chastity, destined to serve as a material foundation for the infused virtue itself which supernaturalizes it and in its turn uses it.

In seeing that the child can himself efficiently employ his infused virtue of chastity, the following course is imposed upon those charged with his education:

They should urge the child to receive the

Sacraments and to practise piety; for it is of faith that the Sacraments received in the desired conditions—that is, as long as no obstacle is placed to them—increase sanctifying grace in us, and through it all the virtues of of which it is the source. At the same time our merits obtain for us from God a direct increase of grace and virtue. So that, when the time comes for the child knowingly to exercise the virtue of chastity, he will find it strong and able to conquer the obstacles that it may encounter in his little nature, incompletely educated and curbed. But this practice of piety and use of the Sacraments ought to be organized in an intelligent way by parents. I mean that they should not be cultivated for themselves, but that they should be made to serve an integral religious education of the child's will and all his faculties.

In that consists the great art of education. One sees, indeed, some parents who early train their children to the practice of piety, to the frequentation of the Sacraments, but who neglect to knit this up with their daily life.

Thus they destroy with one hand what they build with the other. This is absolutely illogical.

Since it is a matter of faith that all the virtues are connected together in charity, and that, besides, the increase of the supernatural virtues is partly conditioned by the exercise of the corresponding natural virtues acquired under the impulsion of charity and with the co-operation of the supernatural virtues: let us not, then, separate in the education of our children what God has joined together. Let them pray, confess, and communicate, but so that their prayers, confessions, and communions help them to become more and more docile, respectful, industrious, conscientious, modest, mortified, self-controlled, energetic, unselfish, self-denying, and very far from the example of pious children who are disobedient, disrespectful, presumptuous, lazy, pleasure-seeking, grumbling, effeminate, and vain.

There is a complete physical, moral, and intellectual gymnastic to give them methodically, by appealing to all the resources of

nature and grace, such as the practice of piety and the use of the Sacraments; elevated motives of action, as the love of God, the imitation of our Saviour and the saints; the authority of the Church, of parents, of teachers; the love of the Ideal residing in the humblest circumstances; the devotion to duty under all forms; respect for conscience; the instinctive horror of sin; the fear of judgment, death, hell; the attraction of heaven; the force of good example; the sentiment of responsibility.

Negative innocence, in which one would keep them so long as there is no good reason to remove their ignorance, would not allow this method of integral religious education, followed continually until the crisis of puberty and beyond. For during this time their will should be formed, their moral power of resisting increased.

Habituated, by repeated acts of self-control, to react against the excesses of the imagination and the senses, they will be completely armed to resist, when the time comes, the dangers that may arise from necessary revela-

tions. All the natural and supernatural motives and means of action that they will have used from childhood to conquer the defects and acquire the virtues proper to their age, they will spontaneously concentrate upon this particular point of positive education in purity. The supernatural virtue of chastity that God will have increased in them in proportion to their merits, they can then use naturally and intelligently, without this knowledge (which has become necessary, but should be imparted with wisdom and according to the needs of their weak personal exigencies) impeding right action.

In these conditions of elevated morality and of previous education of the will of children, the question of positive training in purity, employing a sane and progressive and strictly individual method, does not present any serious difficulty.

The problem is different, however, if it concerns children badly brought up, open to the caprices of their imagination, never having struggled to conquer themselves nor to

utilize, in such self-conquest, all the motives and means of action furnished by nature and by grace.

Now, at bottom, it is because it is too often thus—it is because parents do not fulfil their whole duty as Catholic educators—that so many eminent moralists and psychologists dread the dangers of any initiation whatever, scientific or otherwise, and have such a decided preference for the method of silence.

From their point of view—that is, considering the problem of educating in purity relatively to the children badly brought up or not brought up at all—they are correct. Their mistake is in generalizing, and preferring in theory and in practice, for all children, the method of silence to every other. Unfortunately, this is not a remedy, especially in the actual circumstances where it does not depend upon parents and teachers indefinitely to prolong this ignorance by destroying all the evil individual or social sources of corruption.

Let us unite both parties by giving to Chris-

tian educators the method of silence during the first phase of childhood, at least until the crisis of puberty, and show to all educators the dangers of scientific initiation.

Let us further agree to oblige parents to give to their children during this period an integral religious education. But let us loyally acknowledge that for those children for whom has come the hour of necessary revelations, it is better for us generally to submit to the necessity of healthily initiating them instead of placing them in the necessity of a vicious initiation by blinding ourselves to circumstances or by shoving off on God and grace what God and nature have placed partly in our hands.

As to badly reared children, that is another and a thorny question. We shall obtain nothing from the parents, and it is undoubtedly better to ask nothing. The heavy task, then, falls upon us priests, confessors, teachers, to remake on better lines a badly begun education, and to instruct them individually,

according to the measure of their needs and our resources.

Those who individually escape us we can reach in our catechetical classes, our schools and day-nurseries, instructing them collectively and attempting to perfect, according to our means, their moral education: negatively, by subtracting as much as possible from the dangers of the home, the workshop, and the street; positively, by working for the formation of their intellect and their heart, and by encouraging in them the habits of piety and of frequenting the Sacraments.

(2) *From Childhood to Adolescence.*— Suppose, then, that we are considering well brought up children, accustomed from their earliest years to conquer themselves and spontaneously to have recourse to God, to their parents, or their confessor each time a new difficulty arises.

The crisis of puberty comes. For all sorts of physiological, psychological and moral reasons, which vary from one child to another, and which would take too long to enu-

merate here, there happens in their little lives a profound change whose secret escapes them, but which forces itself on their attention by its effects. If these children really have absolute confidence in their mother, for example; if each time an embarrassing question has presented itself they have instinctively turned towards her to obtain its solution; so now, too, they will go to her. It is impossible to say beforehand under what form they will present their difficulties and express their doubts, suspicions, sufferings to her. That will depend upon the mentality and temperament of each one.

But their mother, who has their confidence and who knows them intimately from having followed them for ten years or more, will know beforehand of their need. Something or other will make her divine the state of soul in which they are struggling. She will help them, with an art peculiar to mothers, to formulate their questions, because she knows their vocabulary, their cast of mind, and their way of understanding or not understanding a

hint. Here, where science would be impotent, her common sense, sustained and guided by her affection and the very vivid sense of her responsibility, will amply suffice.

Recently I saw a mother who has half a dozen children, the oldest seventeen years old and the youngest about ten. As we talked about this question of training to purity, she told me that she had instructed all, even the youngest, as to the way in which children come into the world. The reasons that she gave me for this initiative were perfectly convincing. I then asked what impression these revelations had made upon the spirit of her daughters.

"An excellent impression," she replied. "The youngest, in particular, was so enraptured that she cried out: 'When I am grown I shall have many children, because now I know that *they will be good to me!*'" This was naïve, but how touching!

"Were your explanations enough," I inquired further, "or did they not seek to know more?"

"No," she replied, "because I have accustomed my children never to seek elsewhere, nor for more than I tell them. They are convinced that I have told them the truth, that the rest does not concern them, and that it would be wrong to pass beyond my prohibition. Now, they have such a horror of what is wrong that, for example, they cannot understand how any one can laugh at an evil action cleverly performed, or at a funny lie, a bold robbery, a crime astutely committed."

The partisans of silence will undoubtedly object that this is an exceptional case. Certainly; but it is necessary to call attention to what makes it exceptional. Now the exception does not concern the initiation itself, but the education of these children. And the exception, from this point of view, can easily become the rule. It is because these children were exceptionally well reared that they could be so easily initiated. If all Christian mothers would take the trouble to bring up their children as this one brought up hers, the posi-

tive education in purity would not present so many difficulties.

On the other hand, if some children passing through the crisis of puberty preserve their innocence in virtue of their ignorance, this also is an exception, but this exception cannot become the rule. Observe the difference, for it is essential.

But, some one may ask, what if some children, more curious by disposition and more anxious to know, press their mother with questions more difficult than those concerning maternity; if from the effect they wish immediately to ascend to the cause, what attitude should the mother take? This will depend upon the children and the peculiar needs of each one.

A mother whose son, about sixteen years of age, had to leave home for the university, one day took him aside. "My child," she said in substance, "you are soon to leave us for surroundings that are not at all like home. Certainly, in this environment, if you are not prepared, you will learn things that I do not

want you to learn from any one but me." And she then placed before him, with admirable simplicity, the difficult problem of the sexes. For reply, the young man, more moved by this confidence of his mother than by what he had heard, put his arms around her neck and embraced her. Since then he has given her an affection and recognition of which his father might well be jealous; for it is to his mother, and to the revelations she made, that he owes his safety.

Another exception, some one will object. Yes, but one which, if mothers or confessors know how to get the confidence of youths, can become the rule. The lesson which stands out from this example, taken from a thousand, is very instructive. Until his seventeenth year this young man was content to know what his mother had been pleased to tell him of the problem of maternity. On the advice or command of his mother, he had not sought further. Admitting that seventeen years is the extreme limit when a young man will not try to satisfy his curiosity on these delicate

matters, and that at fifteen, if not before, he pressed his mother or his confessor for more precise knowledge, does the problem of educating to purity therefore change its complexion? It does not seem so.

Indeed, one cannot, *a priori,* assign the age or the exact measure of necessary revelations. What is certain is that, made by a mother or a confessor in whom the child has absolute confidence, and to a child who has received an integral religious education, these revelations do not bring any danger. In every case they mean less danger than a prolonged ignorance, which, to-day or to-morrow, will leave the child at the mercy of circumstances and vicious companions.

Suppose the young man goes to the university? Immediately he will be exposed to the influence of strong spirits who will take a malignant delight in enlightening him. My experience of university life, in the capacity of a teacher of young men, has made me very sure on this point.

Suppose he goes to work? The absolute or

relative promiscuity of the sexes, the conversation of comrades, their freedom of gesture and language, will quickly destroy his ignorance and forever compromise his innocence.

What if he goes on a farm, or into service in a village, or clerks in a big firm or store? This precocious menial condition will deliver him up, bound hand and foot, to the most nefarious influences—to those of the cellar during the day, the garret at night, the street during hours of leisure.

Hence the only question that always remains the same is: Between the certain dangers of a vicious initiation and the hypothetical danger of a healthy initiation has one the right to hesitate?

I have said nothing as yet of young women of the world, and for a reason. Is it not admitted, in theory, that they wish to know nothing before marriage, and that one ought not to trouble their peace?

Before such a prejudice can be dissipated it must run its time. The facts, however, are all against such a position. I am willing to

admit that young women, since they remain longer than young men under the protection of the home, do not encounter the same dangers.

On this head their relative ignorance can be prolonged. But are not our actual customs profoundly at variance with the holiest laws of the family? Is it not between fifteen and seventeen years of age that young women make their entrance into the world?—and such a world! Is it not a fact that at all entertainments and sports and reunions, all trips, theatre parties, and concerts, young men and women are associated? Is it not true that they are exposed to the seeing, hearing and reading of everything? Is not the danger of flirting, thanks to the worldly usages that the majority of Christian parents feel obliged to follow, constantly close to them?

Consequently, is it better to leave them to themselves, under cover of ignorance often more feigned than real, or, before launching them into society, to call their attention to cer-

tain delicate points, by appealing to all the resources that a primary Christian education has given them? I leave to the reader the conclusion, sure in advance, if he is not the victim of prejudice, that he will decide in favor of a sane and progressive initiation, made to each particular child by his natural educators.

III. Positive Education in Purity: Collective Method

(1) *Moral Education of Adolescence.*—So far we have only spoken of the individual method of educating to purity. But is there not room, once the individual education is assured, for a collective education?

Integral education in purity, then, embraces three very distinct phases. During the first period, which includes childhood properly speaking up to the crisis of puberty, the educators concentrate their efforts upon the moral preparation of the child. They are to be occupied entirely with the formation of

his will, and should leave his intellect in ignorance of questions concerning chastity.

During the second phase, which extends throughout the crisis of puberty, they will apply themselves to making the child pass from negative to positive innocence, by means of a common-sense initiation, whose measure and progress will be governed by the peculiar mentality of each child and the particular circumstances under which his need of knowing is manifested.

The third period embraces adolescence proper. This period includes all the young men and women whom their parents and teachers and confessors have individually initiated into the mysteries of chastity by basing their teaching upon an integral religious education. It is only, then, for such young men and women that the question arises whether it would be well to complete their individual initiation by a collective moral education.

Let the reader weigh well these words: *collective moral education.* There is no question here of *collective scientific education.*

Such an education implies technical teaching. Now I do not believe it would be easy to form a group of young men, even though serious, who would apply themselves earnestly to the necessities of this teaching. There would always be some in the number who, in order to appear before the others as less chaste than they are and less serious than they ought to be, would pun upon the crudest words or turn into ridicule the most circumstantial technical details.

Besides, this scientific collective education, where the technical explanation appears on the ground floor, is not necessary. For young people already individually initiated, a moral education suffices.

But what would it embrace and what advantages are to be gained by making it collective? This remains to be shown.

The collective moral education of which we are now speaking differs essentially from the scientific education in that it contains no technical or direct teaching made to a group concerning the problem of the sexes. There

is no question of establishing, for the use of young people already individually initiated, a course in medicine or gynecology, but simply of calling their attention, in appropriate lectures, to certain social prejudices relative to chastity which occur in the different surroundings in which they will be thrown; the dangers of a certain *camaraderie* in the shop, at the university, and especially where the literary and athletic customs of to-day assemble young people; the injurious influence of bad conversation, of romantic or gamy literature, of theatres, moving-pictures, cafés, concerts, gambling; the respect due to all women, no matter what they are; the nature and impropriety of flirting; the disastrous consequences of immorality from the individual, family, and social side; the possibility and good effects of chastity, despite the absurd theories whose echo will have reached even them; the beauty of true and healthy love such as the Church contemplates in marriage and the home; the Christian atmosphere that ought to surround their friendships; the

natural and supernatural means that they ought to use to cultivate in themselves the delicate flower of purity, and to make its perfume exhale around them.

This programme, as one sees, is at the same time definite and vast. To realize its necessity, one has only to reflect that in a few months these young people will leave home or college and find themselves in a completely different environment, where, doubtless, they will be well surrounded, whether it be at a university or elsewhere, with perfectly organized institutions, but free to enter or not, and in any case they will not remain more than an hour or so a week. Left to themselves between times, what will they do if they are entirely ignorant of the difficulties attending them, and which I shall point out?

And even if they were for a long time conversant with these difficulties and firmly determined to overcome them, they do not know on what side of them are young people sharing the same ideas and asking only for union in order to support the struggle.

That, then, is why it is advisable that such a moral education should have a collective character. On finding themselves in the world, in the shop, the university, the technical school, these young people, nourished together with the same ideas, leavened with the same zeal, will instinctively approach each other, and, alongside the groups of pleasure-seekers bent merely upon amusement and gathering others into the orbit of their debaucheries, will form other groups, big and little, which will have no other aim than to guard inviolate their virtue and to make it shine forth without boasting, but with firmness, in their conversation and conduct. They will assess the group in order to have good books and recreative and improving entertainments. Together they will go to church, frequent the libraries, the lecture halls, the associations of young people that priests and zealous and intelligent lay folk have organized for our youth.

Should any one say that this collective moral education is impossible, is it not the

fault of the educators rather than of the young folks? In our fairly large parishes, however, and even in our villages, but especially in our colleges, it will not be difficult to find a priest capable of gathering together the élite of our young people, and organizing lectures for their benefit. There will be less question of eloquence than of speaking from the heart and with the authority of the priesthood, utilizing intelligently the articles and books, so numerous to-day, that have treated these questions from a frank and Christian point of view.

The problem is a little more delicate where our young women are concerned, but it is not more insoluble there. I know a boarding-school where the chaplain gathered together the oldest of the last year, and with perfect tact, without entering at all into useless technical details, seriously prepared them to meet the world, to react against its prejudices and its customs, and to prepare themselves in the light of the foundation and organization of a home.

Under these conditions, is the chastity of adolescents guaranteed forever? Assuredly not. This collective moral education ought to be continued wherever it is possible to assemble the youth of the schools, of the work-aday world, and of society. But on this point there has already been undertaken much admirable work, such as retreats for adult men and women; retreats for workingmen; study classes for young men and women; students' libraries, lecture halls, courses of religious instruction, apologetic lectures, popular moving pictures, athletic clubs and others which, if they have some real inconveniences, at least have the advantage of drawing our young people for some hours from surroundings where their virtue would be seriously endangered.

There is still much to do, but the important thing is that notice is being taken and a beginning made. Now there is no doubt that we are as observant in France as elsewhere. The works that I am going to cite show faith,

and it is proper that I should enumerate them all.

"In many factories," M. Legrand tells us, "once or twice a week, the young workers are assembled for the teaching of the catechism, church history, and religion. Frequently for the women it is a religious, the Sister of the factory, who has this duty; elsewhere it is the wife or daughter of the employer; for the boys it is often the chaplain of the village institutions or the curate of the parish. The course is optional, but it is usually well attended. . . . There are also the retreats which have formed an élite of Catholic workingmen and workingwomen who have been the most valuable allies of the employers in improving the moral tone of the factories.

"For three or four years this method has been applied to the young workingmen. As a start they have been assembled in small groups in the protectories for two or three days. Almost four hundred children profited by this last year. Encouraged by the success

of these attempts, it is planned to construct a house to give retreats to adolescents. There will issue thence an élite class upon which we can count to perfect the moral formation of their comrades." [5]

We have already remarked that in Germany the imperial government and the various states and municipalities have applied themselves to organize their efforts upon the basis of a thought-out doctrinal programme, of which we have quoted the negative part. Here are the positive measures that are principally recommended for the struggle against demoralizing literature:

"(*a*) The satisfaction given to the youthful imagination by a healthy literature (in the schools and public libraries, lecture halls, associations of young people, by the publication of juveniles), by varied bodily exercise, such as walking, sports, games and manual labor.

"(*b*) The opposing of the excessive desire of children to read, by exciting to physical exercises."

(2) *Æsthetic Education.*—There is no

manual for education in purity that does not recommend to educators the withdrawal from children of all licentious images, insolent nudities, and pornographic pictures. One cannot, indeed, insist too much upon this point in our age of shameless literature and so-called art. But how can one guard against all dangers in this field! What child can walk along a busy street without having his attention attracted to some obscenity, or to some shocking reproduction of a pretended masterpiece? If children wish to buy post-cards, their choice must be made in the presence of more or less immoral views exposed in the show-cases, or they are obliged to consult albums containing all the nudities of our salons. Despite their good will, their most intimate feelings will be bruised if they resist the temptation to look, or wonderfully troubled if they yield for the slightest moment to an unhealthy curiosity.

Besides, it is not only shameless post-cards that at one time or another may compromise the purity of children and of adolescents.

Are not our galleries and museums on certain days open to all? But why should I speak of museums and galleries! In some of our churches, in many of our cathedrals, in our most famous palaces, in our public parks, are there not statues and groups upon which the eyes of our young men and women naturally fall? Nevertheless, it would not occur to any one to remove all such works, or to forbid children to gaze upon them.

Hence I ask if the means of lessening this danger of the eyes be not early to teach children carefully to guard their glances and to accustom them as much to a horror of ugliness as of evil, and to a love of the beautiful as well as of the good? In other words, I ask if in our programme of studies we cannot introduce, with the secondary object of protecting the souls of our children, a strong æsthetic education?

Let no one distort my idea. I do not pretend for a moment that there should be for children a complete course in æsthetics, where,

for instance, the question of the nude in art would be discussed with proofs.

It is with æsthetic education as with education in purity. To make it efficient, account must be taken of the modesty of children and of the peculiar needs of each age. In the first phase of childhood one can, without too much trouble, awaken in them the taste for the beautiful by calling their attention to the spectacles of nature, to the masterpieces of religious art which throng our churches, and whose artistic reproductions are now within the reach of the whole world.

Later, when they are able to reflect, it will be possible to show them that there is a way of seeing in the purest masterpieces of religious or profane art something else than the glorification of the flesh.

Is there not, indeed, a real danger in making adolescents see the nude only under an aspect of immorality? Is not this to make it a fixed idea with them, so that they will consider their morals shattered if by chance a

little nudity should be called to their attention?

One thing is certain, it is necessary to appeal to their delicacy of soul, to their love of virtue, to keep them from exposing themselves to temptation out of gaiety of heart. But if this strong moral education has been completed by a serious æsthetic study, do we not in advance guarantee many of our young people against vain scruples, and, what is more important, against the instinctive tendency to seek after "forbidden fruit"?

We shall say no more on this point. The question has not yet been settled, and it is full of difficulties. But when the purity of children is at stake we ought to spare no pains in helping them to furbish their weapons in the battle for the Ideal, and to show all the valor of honorable and Christian men.

[1] La Réforme Sociale, Paris, 1911, 1-16 août, p. 129.
[2] *Id.*, août, 1911, p. 153.
[3] *Id.*, 16 Octobre, 1911, pp. 435 *et seq.*
[4] *Id.*, pp. 433-442.
[5] *Id.*, pp. 439, 441.

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